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# THE HISTORIANS' HISTORY OF THE WORLD

EDWARD GIBBON

# HE HISTORIANS' HISTORY OF THE WORLD . . .

A COMPREHENSIVE NARRATIVE OF THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONS AS RECORDED BY THE GREAT WRITERS OF ALL AGES


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# CONTENTS

## VOLUME VII

## BOOK I. THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE EAST

PAGE

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY. A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE AGES. By James T. Shotwell, Ph.D. . . . . xiii

HISTORY IN OUTLINE OF THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE EAST . . . 1

CHAPTER I

THE REIGN OF ARCADIUS (395–408 A.D.) . . . . 25

A comparison of the two empires, 25. Greatness of Constantinople, 28. The East and the West, 30. Alaric's revolt, 30. Eutropius the Eunuch, 33. Tribigild the Ostrogoth; the fall of Eutropius, 35. St. John Chrysostom, 39.

CHAPTER II

REIGN OF THEODOSIUS THE YOUNGER TO THE ELEVATION OF JUSTINIAN (408–527 A.D.) 42

The Huns, 45. Ammianus Marcellinus describes the Huns, 47. Attila, king of the Huns, 48. The diplomacy of Attila, 54. Attempt to assassinate Attila, 58. Successors of Theodosius, 60.

CHAPTER III

JUSTINIAN AND THEODORA (525–548 A.D.) . . . . 66

The factions of the Circus, 69. Avarice and profession of Justinian, 74. The building of St. Sophia, 79. Other buildings of Justinian, 81. Fortifications, 82. Suppression of the schools, 85. Extinction of the Roman consulship, 87. The Vandalic War, 87. Belisarius, 89. Belisarius enters Carthage, 92. Triumph and meekness of Belisarius, 96. Solomon's wars with the Moors, 98. Military tactics under Justinian, 100. Decadence of the soldiery, 103.

CHAPTER IV

THE LATER YEARS OF JUSTINIAN'S REIGN (535–565 A.D.) . . 106

Byzantium rids Rome of the Goths, 106. Finlay's estimate of Belisarius, 109. The Goths renew the war, 110. Belisarius in Rome, 111. Gibbon's estimate of Belisarius and his times, 113. Barbaric inroads, 114. Slavic incursions, 116. Turks and Avars, 119. Relations of the Roman Empire with Persia, 121. The revolt in Africa, 124. Invasion of the Cotrigur Huns, 127. End of Belisarius, 129. Death of Justinian, 130. Justinian as a legislator, 131.

## CHAPTER V

PAGE
REIGN OF JUSTIN II TO HERACLIUS (565–629 A.D.) . . . 137

Reign of Tiberius, 140. The Emperor Maurice, 142. The Persian War, 143. The Avars, 147. State of the Roman armies, 150. Rebellion against Maurice, 151. Phocas emperor, 153. Heraclius emperor, 155. Heraclius plans to remove the capital to Carthage, 158. The awakening of Heraclius, 159. Triumph of Heraclius, 162. The siege of Constantinople, 164. Third expedition of Heraclius, 165. Battle of Nineveh, 166. The end of Chosroes, 167.

## CHAPTER VI

HERACLIUS AND HIS SUCCESSORS (610–717 A.D.) . . . 170

The provinces under Heraclius, 173. Barriers against the Northern barbarians, 176. Religious activities of Heraclius, 177. Wars with the Mohammedans, 179. The reign of Constans II, 182. Religious feuds, 183. The growing danger from the Saracens, 184. Reign of Constantine IV, 186. Saracen wars and siege of Constantinople, 187. Justinian II, 189. The government of Leontius, 192. Justinian recovers the throne, 193. Anarchy, 194.

## CHAPTER VII

LEO THE ISAURIAN TO JOANNES ZIMISCES (717–969 A.D.) . . 197

Leo (III) the Isaurian, 201. The siege of Constantinople, 202. Revolt against Leo, 205. The Iconoclasts, 207. Iconoclasm after Leo, 209. The reign of Constantine (V) Copronymus, 210. Government of Copronymus; the Saracen wars, 211. Wars with Bulgaria, 212. Council of 754, 214. Leo IV and Constantine VI, 215. The empress Irene, 216. Irene and iconoclasm, 217. End of Byzantine authority at Rome, 219. Nicephorus and Michael I, 220. Leo the Armenian, 221. The Amorian dynasty (820–867 A.D.): Michael II, 222. Theophilus, 222. Theodora and Michael the Drunkard, 223. The Basilian or Macedonian dynasty (867–1057 A.D.): Basil, 225. Leo (VI) the Philosopher, 228. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, 228. Romanus Lecapenus, 229. Romanus II, 230. Nicephorus Phocas, 231. The wars of Nicephorus, 231.

## CHAPTER VIII

GLORY AND DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE (969–1204 A.D.) . . . 235

The Russian war, 237. War with the Saracens, 241. The apex of glory, 242. Basil II and his successors, 243. Separation of Greek and Latin churches, 250. The Comneni, 251. Romanus in the field, 253. Captivity of the emperor, 255. The sons of Constantine XI and Nicephorus III, 257. Anna Comnena's history, 259. Troubles of Alexius, 259. The Norman invasion, 260. Joannes (II) Comnenus (Calo-Joannes), 263. Manuel I, 264. The adventures of Andronicus, 266. Alexius II, 269. Andronicus I emperor, 270. Gibbon's review of the emperors, 271. Isaac (II) Angelus, 273. Intervention of the crusaders, 273. The capture of Constantinople, 275. Second capture, and sack of the city, 278.

## CHAPTER IX

PAGE
THE LATIN EMPIRE (1204–1261 A.D.) . . . . . 282

The election of an emperor, 283. Baldwin crowned, 284. Division of the territory, 285. The pope acknowledged, 286. Fate of the royal fugitives, 287. Baldwin quarrels with Boniface, 288. Other conquests, 290. The Bulgarian War, 291. Defeat of the Latins, 292. The fate of Baldwin, 295. Henry of Hainault, 296. Pierre de Courtenai and Robert of Namur, 298. Jean de Brienne, 299. Baldwin II, 300. The crown of thorns, 300. Progress of the Greeks, 301. Constantinople recovered by the Greeks, 302.

## CHAPTER X

THE RESTORATION OF THE GREEK EMPIRE (1204–1391 A.D.) . . 304

Theodore (I) Lascaris and Joannes Vatatzes, 304. Theodore (II) Lascaris and Joannes (IV) Lascaris, 305. Michael (VIII) Palæologus, 305. Michael Palæologus crowned emperor, 307. Return and rule of the Greek emperor, 308. The provinces of the empire, 311. Andronicus II, 317. The Catalan Grand Company, 320. The duchy of Athens, 322. Walter de Brienne and Cephisus, 322. Andronicus II to the restoration of the Palæologi, 323. The crusade of the fourteenth century, 329. The empire tributary to the Turks, 330.

## CHAPTER XI

MANUEL II TO THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (1391–1453 A.D.) . . 331

Manuel II, 331. Reign of Joannes VII, 336. Brief union of the Greek and Roman churches, 337. Reign of Constantine XIII, 338. War with Muhammed, 340. Church dissensions, 341. Preparations for defence, 342. The siege begins, 344. The final assault, 349. The sack of Constantinople, 352. End of the Comneni and Palæologi, 356.

BRIEF REFERENCE-LIST OF AUTHORITIES BY CHAPTERS . . . . . 359

# BOOK II. THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST

INTRODUCTION . . . . . 361

## CHAPTER I

ODOACER TO THE TRIUMPH OF NARSES (476–568 A.D.) . . . 377

The rise of Theodoric, 380. The Goths move upon Italy, 383. Theodoric the Great, 385. Theodoric and the Church, 389. The fate of Boethius and Symmachus, 391. The troubles of Amalasuntha, 394. Justinian intervenes, 396. Witiges king of the Goths, 399. Belisarius and the siege of Rome, 399. Sufferings of the Romans, 402. The pope deposed, 403. A three months' truce, 404. Last efforts of the Goths, 405. Jealousy of the Roman generals, 406. A Frankish invasion, 407. The test of Belisarius' fidelity, 409. The rise of Totila, 410. Belisarius again in

PAGE

Italy, 412. Second siege of Rome, 413. Totila captures Rome, 415. Belisarius remantles the deserted city, 416. Totila again takes Rome, 417. Narses returns to Italy, 418. Battle of Taginæ and death of Totila, 419. Progress of Narses, 420. Interference of the Franks, 422. Battle of Capua, or the Vulturnus, 423. End of Gothic sway, 424.

CHAPTER II

LOMBARD INVASION TO LIUTPRAND'S DEATH (568–744 A.D.) . . 426

Early history of the Lombards, 426. Their wanderings from the Elbe to the Danube, 427. The Lombards in the region of the Danube, 429. Wars with the Gepids, 431. Alboin annihilates the Gepid power, 433. Alboin plans to invade Italy, 434. The end of Narses, 435. The Lombards enter Italy, 436. The end of Alboin, 437. Extent of Lombard sway, 440. The reign and wooing of Authari, 442. Lombard government and law, 443. The decay of Rome, 444. The Lombard kings, 445. Decline of the Lombard kingdom, 446. Reign of Liutprand, 447. Liutprand and Martel, 448. Liutprand and the Italian powers, 449. Liutprand, the pope, and Constantinople, 450. Peace with Rome, 454. Hodgkin's estimate of Liutprand, 455.

CHAPTER III

THE FRANKS TO THE TIME OF CHARLES MARTEL (55 B.C.–732 A.D.) . 457

First conflicts with Rome, 460. Franks in the Roman army, 462. Early kings and the Salic Laws, 463. The reign of Clovis, 466. Clovis turns Christian, 469. Successors of Clovis to Pepin, 477. The rise of Pepin, 481. Pepin of Heristal, 482. The career of Charles Martel, 488.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLES MARTEL TO CHARLEMAGNE (732–768 A.D.) . . . 497

The Saracens repelled, 498. The affairs of Rome, 499. The pope calls to Charles, 500. Carloman and Pepin the Short, 502. Pepin sole ruler, 504. Secularisation, 506. The anointing of Pepin, 507. Lombard affairs, 509. The pope visits Pepin, 511. Pepin invades Italy, 513. Second war with the Lombards, 513. Desiderius made Lombard king, 515. Pepin and the Aquitanians, 516.

CHAPTER V

CHARLEMAGNE (768–814 A.D.) . . . . . 520

His biography, by a contemporary, 520. The Italian War, 523. The Saxon War, 524. The pass of Roncesvalles, 525. Third visit to Italy, 526. Bavarian War with Tassilo, 526. Wars in the North and with the Avars, 527. Danish War, 528. Glory of Charlemagne, 528. His family, 530. His personal look and habits, 532. His imperial title, 535. His death, 535. His will and testament, 537. Giesebrecht on Charles the Great, 539. The final subjugation of the Saxons, 543. The imperial coronation, 544. Administration and reforms of Charles, 546. Last years of Charles, 552. The legendary Charlemagne, 554. The Monk of St. Gall's story, 554. Sheppard's summary of the legends, 555.

## CHAPTER VI

PAGE

CHARLEMAGNE'S SUCCESSORS TO THE TREATY OF VERDUN (814–843 A.D.) . 557

Louis le Débonnaire, or Pious, 557. Humiliation of Louis, 560. Louis returns to power, 561. Last years of Louis, 563. Quarrels of his successors, 565. Charles the Bald and Ludwig the German unite, 566. Lothair brought to terms, 560. Oppression of the Saxon freemen, 570. The Treaty of Verdun, 571.

## CHAPTER VII

THE BIRTH OF GERMAN NATIONALITY (843–936 A.D.) . . . 574

The reign of Ludwig the German, 575. War with the Slavonic tribes, 576. Ludwig turns against Charles the Bald, 577. The end of Lothair, 578. Ludwig and Charles divide Lothair's possessions, 580. Last years of Ludwig the German, 580. The sons of Ludwig the German; Charles the Fat, 582. Ludwig the Younger, 583. Ravages of the Northmen, 586. Charles the Fat, 587. Arnulf, 589. Arnulf enters Italy, 591. The Babenberg feud, 593. The Hungarian invasions, 594. Conrad I, 595. Reign of Henry (I) the Fowler, 598. The unification of the empire, 599. Wars against outer enemies, 601.

## CHAPTER VIII

OTTO THE GREAT AND HIS SUCCESSORS (936–1024 A.D.) . . 608

The coronation of Otto I, 608. The overthrow of the Stem duchies, 609. The tenth-century renaissance, 610. The strengthening of the marks, 613. Victory over the Magyars and Wends, 613. The revival of the Roman Empire, 614. The imperial coronation, 615. Wars in Italy against Byzantium, 617. Comparison of Henry the Fowler and Otto with Charlemagne, 618. The unforeseen evils of Otto's reign, 620. Otto II, 621. Otto in France and Italy, 622. Quelling of the Slavs, 622. Otto III, 623. Otto III makes and unmakes popes, 624. Henry (II) the Saint, 626. Henry's policy, 627. Relation of Italy to the empire at death of Henry II, 628.

## CHAPTER IX

THE FRANCONIAN, OR SALIAN DYNASTY (1024–1125 A.D.) . . 630

A national assembly, 631. Conrad II increases his power, 633. Conrad in Italy and Germany, 635. The accession of Henry III, 638. Henry's efforts for peace, 639. The papacy subordinated to Henry, 640. The truce of God, 644. Sorrows of Henry's last years, 645. Henry IV, 646. Quarrel between Henry IV and Gregory VII, 648. "Going to Canossa": a contemporary account, 650. Henry's struggle to regain power, 653. Henry and Conrad, 654. End of Henry IV, 655. Henry V and the war of investitures, 656.

BRIEF REFERENCE-LIST OF AUTHORITIES BY CHAPTERS . . . . . 660

# ILLUSTRATIONS

## VOLUME VII


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Edward Gibbon | *Frontispiece* |
| Byzantine Emperor | 29 |
| Byzantine Peasant | 32 |
| Byzantine Priest | 37 |
| Costume of a Byzantine Emperor | 49 |
| Byzantine Imperial Guard | 50 |
| Weapons of the Huns | 57 |
| Coats of Mail, very early Period | 69 |
| A Byzantine Costume | 73 |
| A Byzantine Goblet | 77 |
| A Byzantine Noble | 79 |
| Gothic Weapons and Helmet | 85 |
| A Vandal Chief | 89 |
| The Roman Forum | *Facing page* 90 |
| Byzantine Oil Vase | 93 |
| Byzantine Silver Cup | 97 |
| A Goth | 102 |
| A Goth of Quality | 110 |
| A Gothic Chief | 115 |
| A Byzantine Costume | 118 |
| A Persian Noble | 123 |
| Gold Medallion of Justinian | 126 |
| A Byzantine Castle | 130 |
| Ancient Lamp | 136 |
| Byzantine Spur and Bit | 141 |
| Byzantine Coloured Glass Bracelets | 145 |
| A Byzantine Sacred Vessel | 149 |
| A Byzantine Officer | 152 |
| Jerusalem | 156 |
| A Byzantine Priest | 157 |
| Trophy of Roman Arms and Ensign | 164 |
| A Saracenic Metal Casket | 173 |
| A Saracen | 177 |
| Robes of a Pope of the Seventh Century | 183 |
| Saracenic metal-work Brazier | 187 |
| Part of a Saracen Standard | 190 |
| A Byzantine Peasant | 200 |

# ILLUSTRATIONS


PAGE

An Eighth Century Galley . . . . . 204
Captain of Mercenary Troops, Byzantine Empire . . . . . 208
Chief of Barbarian Mercenaries, Byzantine Empire . . . . . 209
Robes of an Archbishop, Eighth Century . . . . . 219
A Scholar of the Ninth Century . . . . . 225
Norman War Vessels . . . . . 235
Types of Early Chain Armour . . . . . 238
War Galley, Eighth and Ninth Centuries . . . . . 243
Byzantine Emperor in the Costume of a General . . . . . 254
A Byzantine Soldier . . . . . 259
A Byzantine Soldier . . . . . 267
A Saracen Brass Vessel . . . . . 271
A Frank Soldier . . . . . 274
Ruins of a Saracen Tower . . . . . 279
A Crusader . . . . . 282
Methods of Attacking a Wall, Eleventh Century . . . . . 285
War Galley of the Eleventh Century . . . . . 289
Coat of Mail of the Eleventh Century . . . . . 291
Helmet of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries . . . . . 297
A Thirteenth Century Crusader . . . . . 301
Twelfth Century Shield . . . . . 303
Twelfth Century Candlestick . . . . . 307
A Twelfth Century Cross-bow . . . . . 311
Twelfth Century Knight in Coat of Mail . . . . . 315
A Twelfth Century Catapult . . . . . 318
Thirteenth Century Cross-bow . . . . . 323
A Fourteenth Century Catapult . . . . . 326
A Fourteenth Century Knight . . . . . 334
Muhammed II . . . . . 339
Muhammed II . . . . . 344
Fifteenth Century Cannon . . . . . 346
Fifteenth Century Cannon . . . . . 351
Ancient Cannon . . . . . 358
Musical Instruments, Middle Ages . . . . . 376
Early Gothic Helmet and Axe . . . . . 382
Gothic Helmet and Weapons . . . . . 394
A Goth, Peasant Costume . . . . . 398
Costume of a Gothic Woman . . . . . 407
A Gothic Officer . . . . . 415
A Gothic Warrior . . . . . 420
Frankish Soldier . . . . . 425
A Lombard Warrior . . . . . 428
A Lombard King . . . . . 431
A Lombard Costume . . . . . 436
Coat of Mail of a King in the Eighth Century . . . . . 451
A Friar, Eighth Century . . . . . 454
Ancient Leather Book Case . . . . . 456

# ILLUSTRATIONS


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Early Frankish Warriors | 459 |
| A Frankish Officer | 464 |
| Clovis I | 468 |
| Homage to Clovis II | *Facing page* 470 |
| Weapons of the Franks | 471 |
| A Frankish Officer | 474 |
| Clotaire | 478 |
| Clovis II | 480 |
| A Lombard King | 483 |
| Clovis III | 487 |
| The Battle of Tours | *Facing page* 488 |
| Chilperic II | 491 |
| A Frankish Officer | 499 |
| Childeric | 503 |
| A Merovingian Frank | 506 |
| The Last Merovingian King: Childeric the Stupid | *Facing page* 510 |
| Pepin | 511 |
| Frankish Weapons | 517 |
| Ancient Candlestick | 519 |
| A Saxon | 524 |
| A Saxon Warrior | 529 |
| A Frankish Trumpeter | 533 |
| A Frankish Woman of Quality | 537 |
| The Crowning of Charlemagne at Rome, 800 A.D. | *Facing page* 550 |
| Cathedral at Aachen, where Charlemagne was buried | 556 |
| Louis le Débonnaire | 559 |
| Ninth Century Crossbow | 565 |
| A King of the Ninth Century | 569 |
| Charles the Bald | 572 |
| Charles the Bald | 579 |
| A West Frank | 584 |
| Ludwig the Younger | 586 |
| Charles the Simple | 589 |
| Conrad the First | 596 |
| German Peasant of the Tenth Century | 614 |
| A German Chief | 619 |
| Charlemagne and the Scholars | *Facing page* 620 |
| A German Archer | 625 |
| Musical Instruments of the Middle Ages | 629 |
| Helmets of the Early Middle Ages | 630 |
| German Woman of Quality of the Tenth Century | 633 |
| A German Warrior | 636 |
| German Warrior of the Eleventh Century | 641 |
| German Noble of the Eleventh Century in Court Dress | 643 |
| Henry IV | 650 |
| A German Knight of the Twelfth Century | 653 |
| MAP—Empire of Charlemagne | *Facing page* 662 |

# A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

By JAMES T. SHOTWELL, Ph. D.

Of Columbia University

## THE TRANSITION TO THE MIDDLE AGES

The fifth century is, in a way, the beginning of the history of Europe. Until the hordes of Goths, Vandals, and Franks came out from the fastnesses beyond the Rhine and Danube and played their part upon the cleared arena of the empire itself, the history of the world was antique. The history of the later empire is still a part of the continuous but shifting history of the Mediterranean peoples. The civilisation which the legions of Constantine protected was not the product of Rome, it was the work of an antiquity which even then stretched farther back, three times farther, than all the distance which separates his time from ours. The empire was all antiquity, fused into a gigantic unit, and protected by the legions drawn from every quarter of the world, from Spain to Syria. As it grew old its roots sank deeper into the past. When it had taken all that Greece had to offer in art and literature, the tongue of Greece gave free access to the philosophy of the orient, and as its pantheon filled with all the gods of the world, its thought became the reflex of that of the Hellenised east. If Rome conquered the ancient world, it was made captive in return. The last pagan god to shine upon the standards of the legions was Mithras, the Sun-god of the Persians, while Isis shared with Jupiter the temple on the Capitol. This world entrenched behind the bulwarks that stretched from Solway to Nineveh, brooding upon its past, was quickened with but one new thought,—and that was an un-Roman one,—the strange, unworldly, Christian faith. The peoples that had become subjects of Rome were now to own a high allegiance to one whom it had condemned as a Jewish criminal; on the verge of its own destruction the empire became Christian. It is the fashion to decry the evil influences of the environment of early Christianity, but it was the best that human history has ever afforded. How would it have fared with Christian doctrine if it had had to do with German barbarians instead of with Greek philosophers, who could fit the new truths into accordance with the teachings of their own antiquity, and Roman administrators who could forge from the

molten enthusiasm of the wandering evangelists, the splendid structure of Catholicism. Before the storm burst which was to test the utility of all the antique civilisation, the church was already stronger than its protectors. And so, at the close, the empire stood for two things, antiquity and Christianity.

In structure, too, the government and society were no longer Roman in anything but name. The administration of the empire had become a Persian absolutism, and its society was verging towards oriental caste. If the art, philosophy, and science of the ancients could be preserved only by such conditions, it was well that they should pass away. The empire in ceasing to be Roman had taken up the worst as well as the best of the past, and as it grew respectable under Stoic or Christian teaching, it grew indifferent to the high impulses of patriotism, cold and formal outwardly, wearying inwardly of its burden.

The northern frontiers of this empire did not prove to be an unbroken barrier to the Germans, however, and for two centuries before the sack of Rome, they had been crossing, individually or in tribes, into the peaceful stretches of the civilised world. Their tribal wars at home made all the more alluring the attractions of the empire. For a long time the Roman armies kept these barbarians from anything resembling conquest, but even the vanquished who survived defeat found a home in Roman villas or among the federated troops. The fifth century merely brought to light what had been long preparing, and it took but few invaders to accomplish the final overthrow. The success of these last invasions has imposed an exaggeration of their extent upon historians. They were not true wanderings of nations, but rather incursions of adventurers. The barbarians we call by the name of Goths were a mixture of many nations, while the army of Clovis was hardly more than a single Roman legion. Yet the important fact is that the invasions of the fifth century were successful, and with them the new age begins.

There were two movements which brought about the overthrow of the Roman Empire; one among the barbarians, the other within the empire itself. The Huns were pressing from the east upon the German peoples, whom long civil wars had weakened to such a degree that they must yield or flee. Just as the strength of the Roman frontier was to be tested, whether it could hold back the combined impulsion of Teuton and Hun, the West Goth within the empire struck at its heart. The capture of Rome by Alaric did not end the empire; it does not seem to have created the universal consternation with which we now associate it. Poets and orators still spoke of Rome as the eternal city, and Alaric's successor, Ataulf, sought the service of that state which he felt unable to destroy. But the sack of Rome was not the worst of the injuries inflicted by Alaric; it was one of the slightest. A disaster had been wrought before he reached the walls of Rome for which all the zeal of Ataulf could not atone. For, so the story runs, Stilicho the last heroic defender of the old empire called in the garrisons from along the frontiers to stay the Gothic advance. The incursions of Alaric within the confines of Italy opened the way to the hesitating but still eager barbarians along the Rhine. The storm bursts at once; the Germans are across the Rhine before Alaric can reach Rome. Instead of their German forests, they have the vineyards of the Moselle and the olive orchards of Aquitaine. The proud nobles in Gaul, unaccustomed to war or peril, can but stand by and watch while their villas lend their plunder to the raiders. After all, the storm, — this one at least, — soon passes. The Suabians and the Vandals cross the Pyrenees and the West Goths come up from Italy, with the varnish of culture upon them, to repress their lawless cousins, and drive them

into the fastnesses of Leon or across to Africa. Fifteen years after the invasion, the poet Ausonius is again singing of the vine-clad hills of the Moselle, and their rich vintage. Gaul has been only partly changed. The noble Sidonius Apollinaris dines with the king Theodoric and is genially interested in his Burgundian neighbours who have settled in the eastern part. By the middle of the century, unaided by the shadow emperors in Italy, this mixture of peoples, conscious of the value of their present advantages, unite to defeat the invading Huns at the battle of Chalons. But another and more barbarous people is now taking possession of the North. The Franks are almost as different from the Visigoths as the Iroquois from the Norman Crusaders. Continually recruited from the forests of the lower Rhine, they do not cut themselves off from their ancient home and lose themselves in the midst of civilisation; they first break the Roman state north of the Loire and then crowd down the Visigoths towards Spain. By the year 500 Gaul has become Frankland, and the Franks have become Catholic Christians. Add to these facts the Saxon conquest of England, the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy, and the overthrow of the empire in the West, and we have a survey of part of the transformation which the fifth century wrought in Western Europe. With it we enter upon the Middle Ages.

Such is our introduction to the new page of history. Behind us are now the fading glories of old Rome; the antique society is outwardly supplanted by the youthful and untutored vigour of the Teutonic peoples. But the numbers of the invaders is comparatively few and the world they conquered large in extent, and it had been romanising for four hundred years. The antique element still persisted; in the East it retained its sovereignty for another thousand years, in the West it compromised with the Teutonic element in the creation of a Roman Empire on a German basis, which was to last until the day of Napoleon, and in the recognition of the authority of the Roman hierarchy. The Church and the Empire, these two institutions of which we hear most in the Middle Ages, were both of them Roman, but both owed their political exaltation to the German Carolingian kings. It was Boniface the Saxon, that "proconsul of the Papacy," who bound the Germans to the Roman See; but Pepin lent his strong aid, and Charlemagne doubly sealed the compact.

The coronation of the great king of the Franks as emperor of the Romans forecasts a line of history that was not followed, however, in the way he had in mind. The union of Teuton and Roman, or better, of Teuton and antiquity, was not destined to proceed so simply and so peacefully. Instead of an early revival of the great past, the world went down into the dark age, and was forced to struggle for many centuries slowly upward towards the day when it could again appreciate the antiquity it had forgotten. In other words the Middle Ages intervened to divide the renaissance of Charlemagne from that which culminated in Erasmus. How can we explain this phenomenon? What is its significance? It is essential that we face these questions if we would understand in the slightest the history of Europe. And yet as we examine the phenomenon itself we may find some reconstruction of our own ideas of it will be necessary.

## THE MIDDLE AGES

Let us now turn to the Middle Ages. We shall find something of novelty in the act, for in all the world's history there is no other period which ordinarily excites in us so little interest as this. Looking back across the

centuries from the heights of Modern Times, we have been taught to train our eyes upon the far but splendid table-lands of Rome, and to ignore the space that intervenes, as though it were nothing but a dreary blank between the two great epochs of our history. Dark Ages and Middle Ages are to most of us almost synonymous terms, — a thousand years filled with a confusion, with no other sign of life than the clash of battle or the chanting of hymns, a gruesome and unnatural world, dominated by either martial or monastic ideals, and void of almost everything we care for or seek after to-day.

It is strange that such a perspective has persisted so long, when it requires but the slightest analysis of the facts to prove its utter falsity. The merest glance along the centuries reveals the fact that this stretch of a thousand years is no level plain, no monotonous repetition of unprogressive generations, but is varying in character and progressive in all the deeper and more essential elements of civilisation ; in short, is as marked by all the signs of evolution as any such sweep of years in all the world's history. Yet the mistake in perspective was made a long time ago ; it is a heritage of the Renaissance. When men looked back from the attainments of the sixteenth century to the ancient world which so fascinated them, they forgot that the very elevation upon which they stood had been built by the patient work of their own ancestors, and that the enlightenment which they had attained, the culture of the Renaissance itself, would have been impossible but for the stern effort of those who had laid the foundations of our society upon Teutonic and Christian basis in the so-called Middle Ages. The error of the men of the Renaissance has passed into history and lived there, clothed with all the rhetoric of the modern literatures, and upheld with all the fire of religious controversy. How could there be anything worth considering in an age that on the one hand was void of a feeling for antique ideas and could not write the periods of Cicero, and on the other hand was dominated by a religious system which has not satisfied all classes of our modern world ? But if we condemn the Middle Ages on these grounds, we are turning aside from the up-building of the Europe of to-day, because its æsthetic and religious ideals were not as varied or as radical as ours. And for this we are asked to pass by that brilliant twelfth century which gave us universities, politics, the dawn of science, a high philosophy, civic life, and national consciousness, or the thirteenth century that gave us parliaments. Is there nothing in all this teeming life but the gropings of superstition ? It is clear that as we look into it, the error of the Renaissance grows more absurd. Our perspective should rather be that of a long slope of the ascending centuries, rising steadily but slowly from the time of the invasions till the full modern period.

Let us look at the details. The break-up of the Roman world which resulted in the first planting of the modern nations, did not cause that vast calamity which we call the Dark Age. The invasion of the Teutons and the infusion of their vigour into the effete society of southern Europe was not a fatal blow to civilisation. Rude as they were when first they crossed the frontiers of the empire, the German peoples, and especially their leaders, gave promise that almost in their own day whatever was of permanent value in the Roman world should be re-incorporated into the new society. This series of recoveries had to be repeated with every new people, but it finally seemed about to culminate in the wider renaissance of Charlemagne. By the year 800 it looked as though Europe were already on the clear path to modern times. But just as the young Teutonic civilisation reached the light, a second wave of invasion came dashing over it. The Vikings, whom Charlemagne's aged eyes may have watched stealing past the hills of Calais, not only swept the

northern seas, but harried Frankland from the Rhine to the Rhone, until progress was at a standstill and the only thought of the ninth century was that of defence. Then the Hungarians came raiding up the Danube valley, and the Slavs pressed in upon the North. Along the coasts of the Mediterranean the Moorish corsairs were stifling the weak commerce of Italian towns, and landing they attacked such ports as Pisa and even sacked a part of Rome. The nascent civilisation of the Teutons was forced to meet a danger such as would call for all the legions of Augustus. No wonder the weak Caroling kings sank under the burden and the war lords of the different tribes grew stronger as the nerveless state fell defenceless before the second great migration, or maintained but partial safety in the natural strongholds of the land.

In such a situation self-defence became a system. The palisade upon some central hill, the hedge and thicket in the plain, or the ditch in the morass, became the shelter and the centre of life for every neighbourhood that stood in the track of the new barbarians. The owner of the fastness led his neighbours and his tenants to battle; they gave him their labour for his protection, the palisades grew into stone walls and the "little camps" (*castella*) became the feudal castles. Those grim, battlemented towers, that rise up before us out of the dark age, were the signs of hope for the centuries that followed. Society was saved, but it was transformed. The protection of a time of danger became oppression in a time of safety, and the feudal tyranny fastened upon Europe with a strength that cities and kings could only moderate but not destroy.

From the tenth century to the present, however, the history of Europe is that of one continuous evolution, slow, discouraging at times, with many tragedies to record and many humiliations to be lived down. But all in all, no century from that to this has ended without some signal achievement in one line or another, in England, in France, in Italy, or in Germany. By the middle of the tenth century the first unyielding steps had been taken when the Saxon kings of Germany began to build their walled towns along the upper Elbe, and to plant the German colonists along the eastern frontiers, as Rome had long before shielded the northern frontiers of civilisation. By the end of the century the Magyars have settled in the middle Danube, under a king at once Christian and saint, and the greatest king of the Danes is champion of Christendom. In another fifty years the restless Normans are off on their conquests again, but now they carry with them to England and to Italy the invigorating touch of a youthful race who are in the front of their time, and not its enemies.

This new movement of the old Viking stock did good rather than harm in its own day, but it has done immeasurable harm to history. For writers and readers alike have turned at this point from the solid story of progress to follow the banners of these wandering knights, to live in the unreal world of chivalry at the hour when the whole society of Europe was forming itself into the nations of to-day, when the renaissance of commerce was building cities along all the highways of Europe, and the schools were crowded with the students of law and philosophy. From such a broad field of vital interests we are turned aside to follow the trail of some brutal noble who wins useless victories that decide nothing, or besieges cities to no discoverable purpose, and leaves a transient princedom for the spoil of his neighbours. These are the common paths of history through the Middle Ages, and what wonder if they are barren, in the track of such men.

But the age of chivalry was also the age of the universities. Turn from the knight-errant to the wandering scholar if we would find the true key to

the age, but still must leave it in the realm of romance. Few have ever guessed that the true Renaissance was not in the Florence of Lorenzo nor the Rome of Nicholas V, but rather in that earlier century when the great jurists of Bologna restored for all future time the code of Justinian. The greatest heritage of Rome was not its literature nor its philosophy, but its law. The best principles that had been evolved in all the ancient world, on justice, the rights of man, and property, — whose security is the basis of all progress, — all these invaluable truths were brought to light again through the revival of the Roman law, and incorporated again by mediæval legists into the structure of society two centuries before the literary Renaissance of the Italian cities. The crowds of students who flocked to Bologna to study law, and who formed their guild or university on so strange a basis, mark the dawn of modern times fully as well as the academy at Florence or the foundation of a Vatican library. Already the science of politics was revived and the problems of government given practical and scientific test.

Then came the gigantic tragedy of the Hundred Years' War, retarding for more than a century that growth of industry and commerce upon which even the political structure rests. But while English and French alike are laying waste the fairest provinces of France, the University of Paris is able to dictate the policy of the universal church and for a generation to reduce the greatest absolutism of the age, that of the papacy, to the restrictions of parliamentary government. The Council of Constance was in session in the year of the battle of Agincourt. And, meanwhile, there is another development, far more important than the battles of the Black Prince or the marches of Du Guesclin. Commerce thrives along the shores of Italy, and in spite of their countless feuds and petty wars, the cities of Tuscany and Lombardy grow ready for the great artistic awakening. The story of the Middle Ages, like that of our own times, comes less from the camp fire than from the city square. And even there, how much is omitted! The caravans that line the rude bazaar could never reach it but for the suppression of the robbers by the way, largely the work of royalty. The wealth of the people is the opportunity for culture, but without the security of law and order, neither the one nor the other can be attained. In the last analysis, therefore, the protection of society while it developed is the great political theme of the Middle Ages. And now it is time to confess that we have touched upon but one half of that theme. It was not alone feudalism that saved Europe, nor royalty alone that gave it form. Besides the castle there was another asylum of refuge, the church. However loath men have been in recent years to confess it, the mediæval church was a gigantic factor in the preservation and furthering of our civilisation.

The church was the only potent state in Europe for centuries, — an institution vastly different from our idea of it to-day. It was not only the religious monitor and the guardian of the salvation of mankind, it took up the duty of governing when the Roman Empire was gone. It helped to preserve the best things of antiquity; for when the barbarians were led to destroy what was of no use to them, it was the church, as Rashdall says, that widened the sphere of utility. It, more than the sword of Charlemagne tamed the barbarian Germans, and through its codes of penance with punishments almost as severe as the laws of Draco, it curbed the instincts of savagery, and taught our ancestors the ethics of Moses while promising them the salvation of Christ. It assumed much of the administration of justice in a lawless age, gave an inviolate asylum to the persecuted, and took in hand the education of the people. Its monks were not only the pioneer farmers in the fast-

nesses of the wilderness, but their entertainment of travellers made commerce possible. Its parish church furnished a nursery for democracy in the gatherings at the church door for counsel and deliberation. It opened to the sons of peasants a career that promised equality with the haughtiest seigneur, or even the dictation over kings. There was hardly a detail of daily life which did not come under the cognisance or control of the church, — questions of marriage and legitimacy, wills, oaths, even warfare, came under its surveillance.

But in depicting this wonderful system which so dominated Europe in the early Middle Ages, when kings were but shadows or military dictators over uncertain realms, we must be careful not to give too much of an air of religiosity to the whole Middle Age. The men of the Middle Ages did not all live in a cowl. Symonds in his brilliant history of the Renaissance in Italy likens the whole mediæval attitude to that of St. Bernard, the greatest of its ascetics. St. Bernard would walk by the blue waters of Lake Geneva intent only upon his rosary and prayer. Across the lake gleam the snows of Mont Blanc, — a sight no traveller forgets when once he has seen it; but the saint, with his cowl drawn over his eyes, sees only his own sin and the vision of the last judgment. So, says Symonds, humanity walked along its way, a careful pilgrim unheeding the beauty or delight of the world around. Now this is very striking, but is it true? First of all, the Middle Ages, as ordinarily reckoned, include a stretch of ten centuries. We have already seen how unlike these centuries were, how they differed from each other as much as any centuries before or since. The nineteenth is hardly more different from the eighteenth than the twelfth was different from the eleventh. So much for the universalisation as we go up and down the centuries; it can hardly apply to all. Some gave us the Chansons des Gestes, the *Song of Roland*, the legends of Charlemagne and his paladins. Others gave us the delicious lyrics of the minnesingers and troubadours, of Walter von der Vogelweide and Bertran de Born. And as for their variety, we must again recall that the same century that gave us St. Francis of Assisi — that jongleur of God — and the *Divine Comedy*, gave us also Magna Charta and representative government.

But even if we concede that the monks dominated mediæval society as Symonds paints it, we must not imagine that they were all St. Bernards. Few indeed — the sainted few — were alone able to abstract themselves so completely from this life as to be unconscious of their surroundings. The successive reforms, Clugny, Carthusians, Cistercians, beginning in poverty and ending in wealth and worldly influence, show what sort of men wore the cowl. The monks were not all alike; some were worldly, some were religious, some were scholars, and some were merely indolent. The monastery was a home for the scholar, a refuge for the disconsolate, and an asylum for the disgraced. And a monk might often be a man whose sensibilities, instead of being dull, were more sharply awake than our own to-day. His faith kindled an imagination that brought the next world down into his daily life, and one who is in communion with eternity is an unconscious poet as well as a devotee. Dante's great poem is just the essence of a thousand years of such visions. Those phases of the Middle Ages farthest removed from our times and our habits of thought are not necessarily sombre. They are gilded with the most alluring light that ever brightened humanity — the hope and vision of immortality.

It has seemed necessary to say this much at least about the ecclesiasticism of the Middle Ages so that we may get a new or at least a more sym-

pathetic point of view as we study its details. Humanity was not in a comatose condition for a thousand years, to wake up one fine day and discover itself again in a Renaissance. Such an idea gives false conceptions of both the Middle Ages and that slow change by which men acquired new interests, — the Renaissance.

What then was the Italian Renaissance? What was its significance and its result? First of all no new birth of the human spirit, as we have been commonly taught, could come after that wonderful twelfth and busy thirteenth centuries. It would sound strange to the wandering jongleur or the vagabond student, whose satirical and jovial songs of the twelfth century we still sing in our student societies, to be told that he had no joy in the world, no insight into its varying moods, no temperament capable of the comprehension of beauty. If any man ever "discovered himself," surely that keen-witted, freedom-loving scholar, the goliard, was the man, and yet between him and the fall of Constantinople, that commonest date for the Renaissance, there are two hundred years or more. A little study of preceding centuries shows a world brimming with life and great with the promise of modern times. Lawyers were governing in the name of kings; universities were growing in numbers and influence. It has been said, and perhaps it is not far wrong, that there were three great powers in Europe in the Middle Ages — the Church, the Empire, and the University of Paris. And not all the men at the universities of Paris or Oxford or Bologna were busy counting how many angels could dance on the point of a needle, as we are apt to think when we read Lord Bacon's denunciation of the scholastics. If half of them, — and that is a generous estimate, — were busied over theology, not all that half were examining it for their religious edification. Their interests were scientific. In a way they were scientists, — scientists of the world to come, — not of this transient life. They were analysing theology with about the same attitude of mind as that of the physicist of to-day in spite of all that has been said against their method. When one examines a world which he cannot yet reach, or a providence whose ways are not as the ways of man, he naturally will accept the authority of those whom he believes to be inspired, if he is to make even a little headway into the great unknown. The scholastics stretched the meaning of the word inspired, and accepted authority too easily. But they faced their problem with what seems something like a scientific spirit even if they had not yet attained a scientific method. And I may add in passing that to my mind the greatest tragedy of the human intellect is just here, — in this story of the abused scholastics. Starting out confident that all God's ways can be comprehended and reduced to definite data, relying in calm security upon the power of the human intellect to comprehend the ways of Divine governance, they were forced point by point, through irreconcilable conclusions and inexplicable points of controversy, to admit that this doctrine and that, this fact and that one, lie outside the realms of reason and must be accepted on faith. Baffled in its vast endeavour to build up a science of things divine the reason of man turned from the task and grappled with the closer problems of the present world. If the work of the scholastics was futile, as so many claim, it was a grand futility that reaches to tragedy. But out of its very futility grew the science of to-day.

And now with all this intellectual activity of which scholasticism is only a part, where did the so-called Renaissance come in? By the year 1300 the problem of the scholastics was finished. In the works of Thomas Aquinas lay codified and systematised the whole positive product of their work. Not

until after that was their work empty and frivolous, but when scholasticism turned back upon itself, even the genius of the great Duns Scotus but discovered more and more its futility. Men of culture began to find it distasteful; they did not care to study law, — the other main interest. It was time for a new element in the intellectual realm. The need was no sooner felt than supplied. The study of the antique pagan world afforded scholars and men of leisure the desired change. The discovery of this antique world was not a new process; but the features that had been ignored before, the art and literature of the pagan world, now absorbed all attention. The "humanities" gradually crowded their way into university curricula, especially in Germany and England, and from the sixteenth century to the present day the humanities have been the dominant study at the universities. Looking over the era of the Renaissance, we commonly begin it in the fourteenth century, just where our previous sketch of the other intellectual conditions stopped. The age of Petrarch was its dawn. France and England, where most progress had been made before, were now to be absorbed in the barbarism of international and civil wars; and so the last stage of that long Renaissance which we call the Middle Ages became the task and the glory of Italy.

It may seem at first as if, in exalting the achievements of the Middle Ages, we have undervalued the work of the humanists. It would not be in accord with the attempted scientific judicial attitude which it is now our ambition to attain, if this charge were to be admitted. We must give full credit to the influence of that new knowledge, that new criterion, and especially to that new and healthy criticism which came with the Italian Renaissance. Its work in the world was absolutely necessary if modern society was to take up properly its heritage of all those splendid ages which adorned the Parthenon and made the Forum the centre of the world. All the intellectual energy which had gone into antique society must be made over into our own. But after all, the roots of our society are Teutonic and Christian even more than they are Roman or antique. We must learn to date our modern times not merely from the literary revival which witnessed the recovery of a long-lost pagan past; but from the real and splendid youth of Europe when it grappled with the earnest problems of law and order and put between itself and the Viking days the barriers of the national state, — king and people guarding the highways of the world for the protection of the caravans that made the cities. It is as essential for us to watch those boats that ascended the Rhone and the Rhine, and the merchants whose tents were pitched at the fairs of Champagne, as it is to know who discovered the proper derivation of *agnus*.

# PART XI

# THE HISTORY OF THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE

BASED CHIEFLY UPON THE FOLLOWING AUTHORITIES

AGATHIAS, AMMIANUS, AUGUSTAN HISTORY, J. B. BURY, HENRY FYNES CLINTON, GEORGIUS CEDRENUS, ANNA COMNENA, DION CASSIUS, MICHAEL DUCAS, EINHARD (EGINHARD), EUTROPIUS, GEORGE FINLAY, HEINRICH GELZER, EDWARD GIBBON, FRIEDRICH WILHELM BENJAMIN VON GIESEBRECHT, FERDINAND GREGOROVIUS, G. F. HERTZBERG, THOMAS HODGKIN, JORDANES (JORNANDES), JOANNES MALALAS, PROCOPIUS, L. VON RANKE, STRABO, TACITUS, VELLEIUS, GEORG WEBER, JOANNES ZONARAS, ZOSIMUS

TOGETHER WITH

## A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

BY

## JAMES T. SHOTWELL

WITH ADDITIONAL CITATIONS FROM

SIGURD ABEL, JOHANN CHRISTOPH ADELUNG, AGOBARD, ANASTASIUS, ANNALES FULDENSES, ANNALES METTENSES, BARONIUS, FRIEDRICH BLUHME, HENRY BRADLEY, HERMANN BROSIEN, JAMES BRYCE, CODEX CAROLINUS, CASSIODORUS, CHRONICLE OF MOISSIAC, ROBERT COMYN, CORIPPUS, C. DU F. DU CANGE, S. A. DUNHAM, JEAN VICTOR DURUY, ERCHANBERTUS, EVAGRIUS OF EPIPHANEIA, ERNST WILHELM FÖRSTEMANN, FREDEGARIUS SCHOLASTICUS, E. A. FREEMAN, GABRIEL H. GAILLARD, GEORGIUS MONACHUS, HEINRICH GERDES, AUGUST FRIEDRICH GFRÖRER, GREGORY OF TOURS, JACOB GRIMM, ALBERT GUELDENPENNING, HENRY HALLAM, JOSEPH VON HAMMER-PURGSTALL, JEAN BARTHÉLEMY HAURÉAU, KARL JOSEPH VON HEFELE, ISIDORUS HISPALENSIS, HENRY H. HOWORTH, JOHN OF EPHESUS, JULIAN, LAMBERT VON HERSFELD (*or* ASCHAFFENBURG), ERNEST LAVISSE AND ALFRED RAMBAUD, CHARLES LECOINTE, LEO DIACONUS, CHARLTON T. LEWIS, MARIE PAULINE DE LÉZARDIÈRE, LIBANIUS, JULIUS LIPPERT, MALCHUS PHILADELPHUS, WILHELM MARTENS, HENRI MARTIN, WOLFGANG MENZEL, J. F. MICHAUD, MONK OF ST. GAUL, DAVID MÜLLER, FRIEDRICH MÜLLER, NICEPHORUS PATRIARCHA, NICETAS ACOMINATUS, OELSNER, GEORGIUS PACHYMERES, R. PALLMANN, PANEGYRICI VETERES, PAULUS DIACONUS, WALTER C. PERRY, PETRUS PATRIARCHUS, GEORGIUS PHRANZES, PROSPER AQUITANICUS, PTOLEMY, HERMANN VON REICHENAU, E. ROBERT ROESLER, SALVIANUS OF MARSEILLES, F. J. SAULCY, K. SCHENK, F. C. SCHLOSSER, LUDWIG SCHMIDT, J. Y. SHEPPARD, C. SOLLIUS APOLLINARIS SIDONIUS, JAMES SIME, M. E. THALHEIMER, THEOPHANES, THEOPHYLACTUS SIMOCATTA, THIETMAR OF MERSEBURG, GEOFFREY DE VILLE-HARDOUIN, WALAFRIED STRABUS, WIPO, JOHANN G. A. WIRTH, J. K. ZEUS

# BOOK I

# THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE EAST

## *INTRODUCTION*

### THE SCOPE, THE SOURCES, AND THE CHRONOLOGY OF LATER ROMAN HISTORY IN THE EAST

THE period upon which we are now entering presents peculiar difficulties for the historian. The body politic under consideration is in some respects unique. Historians are not even agreed as to the name by which it should properly be designated. It is an empire having its capital at Constantinople; an empire not come suddenly into being in the year 395, at which point, for the sake of convenience, we are now taking up this history; but which is in reality nothing more or less than the continuation of that Roman Empire in the East, the affairs of which we left with the death of Theodosius. That emperor, as we have seen, held sway over an undivided Roman commonwealth. On his death the power that he had wielded passed to his two sons, one of whom nominally held sway in the East, the other in the West. The affairs of the Western division of the empire under Honorius and his successors have claimed our attention up to the time of the final overthrow of Rome in the year 476. We are now returning to follow the fortunes of Arcadius, the other heir of Theodosius, and his successors.

But whether this Eastern principality should properly be spoken of as the Later Roman Empire, or as the Eastern, Byzantine, or Greek Empire, is, as has been suggested, a moot point among historians. The difficulty is perhaps met to the best advantage if we disregard the controversial aspects of the question and make free use of each and all of these names; indeed, in so doing, convenience joins hands with logicality. The empire of Arcadius and his immediate successors was certainly entitled to be called the Roman Empire quite as fully as, for example, were the dominions of Diocletian and Constantine. There was no sudden breach of continuity, no thought of entrance upon a new epoch with the accession of Arcadius. It was no new thing that power was divided, and that there should be two capitals, one in the East and one in the West. On the contrary, as we have seen, there had been not merely a two-fold but a four-fold division of power most of the time since the day of Diocletian. No contemporary could have predicted that after the death of Theodosius the Roman dominions in the East and in the West would never again be firmly united under a single head. Nor indeed is it quite true that the division was complete and permanent; for, as we shall see, there were to be rulers like Justinian and Zeno who had a

dominating influence over the Western territories, and who regarded themselves as masters of the entire Roman domain. And even when the division became complete and permanent, as it scarcely did before the time of Charlemagne, it could still be fairly held that the Roman Empire continued to exist with its sole capital at Constantinople, whither Constantine had transferred the seat of power, regardless of the fact that the Western dominion had been severed from the empire. The fact that this Western dominion included the city of Rome itself, which had given its name to the empire, and hence seemed indissoluble from it, is the chief reason for the seeming incongruity of applying the term Later Roman Empire to the dominion of the East.

It must not be overlooked, however, that there were other reasons for withholding the unqualified title of Roman Empire from the Eastern dominions. The chief of these is that the court of Constantinople departed very radically from the traditions of the West, taking on oriental manners and customs, and, what is most remarkable, gradually relinquishing the Latin speech and substituting for it the language of Greece. We have seen in our studies of earlier Roman history the marked tendency to the Hellenisation of Rome through the introduction of Greek culture from the time when the Roman Republic effected the final overthrow of Greece. It will be recalled that some of the most important histories of Rome, notably those of Polybius and Appian and Dionysius and Dion Cassius, were written in Greek. The emperor Marcus Aurelius wrote his *Meditations* in the same language. But this merely represented the tendency of the learned world. There was no propensity to substitute Greek for Latin as the language of everyday life so long as the seat of empire remained in the West. Now, however, as has been intimated, this strange substitution was effected; the writers of this Later Roman Empire in the East looked exclusively to classical Greece for their models, and in due course the language of court and of common people alike came to be Greek also, somewhat modified from the ancient idiom with the sweep of time, but in its essentials the same language which was spoken at Athens in the time of Pericles. Obviously there is a certain propriety in this use of the term Greek Empire as applied to a principality whose territory included the ancient realms of Athens, and whose customs and habits and speech thus preserved the traditions of ancient Hellas.

The use of the terms Eastern Empire and Byzantine Empire requires no elucidation, having an obvious propriety. As has been said, we shall find it convenient here to employ one or another of the four terms indiscriminately; giving preference perhaps, if a choice must be made, to the simplest and most non-committal form, Eastern Empire.

By whatever name designated, the principality whose fortunes we are to follow will hold our interest throughout a period of more than a thousand years, from the death of Theodosius in 395 to the final overthrow of Constantinople in 1456. This period is almost exactly coincident with the epoch pretty generally designated by historians as the Middle Ages, and usually estimated as a time of intellectual decadence.

As a general proposition this estimate is doubtless just. It must be born in mind, however, that the characterisation applies with far less force to the conditions of the Eastern Empire than to the conditions of Western Europe. The age of Justinian was certainly not a dark age in any proper acceptance of that term. If no subsequent period quite equalled this in brilliancy, yet there were epochs when the Eastern Empire showed something of its old-time vitality. Indeed, there was an almost incessant

intellectual output which served at least to sustain reminiscences of ancient culture, though it could not hope to rival the golden ages of the past. In point of fact, the chief defect of the literature of the time was that it did attempt to rival the classical literature. We have just pointed out that the later Byzantine Empire was essentially Greek in language and thought. Unfortunately the writers of the time failed to realise that in a thousand years of normal development the language — always a plastic, mobile thing, never a fixed structure — changes, grows, evolves.

Instead of contenting themselves with the use of the language with which they were familiar in everyday speech as the medium of their written thoughts, they insisted on harking back to the earlier classical period, consciously modelling their phraseology and style upon authors who had lived and died a thousand years earlier. No great art was ever produced by such conscious imitation. Great art is essentially spontaneous, never consciously imitative; the epoch-making works are done in the vernacular by artists whose first thought is to give expression to their spontaneous feelings and emotions, unhampered by tradition. It was thus that Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, and Aristophanes wrote; and if Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Livy, and Tacitus were more conscious craftsmen, somewhat in the same measure were they less great as artists.

But the Byzantine writers were rather to be compared with the Alexandrians of the age of the Ptolemies. They were far more scientific than their predecessors and proportionately less artistic. As grammarians they analysed and criticised the language, insisting on the retention of those chance forms of speech which the masters of the earlier day had used spontaneously. The critical spirit of the grammarian found its counterpart everywhere in the prevalence of the analytical rather than the synthetic cast of thought. As the masters of the past were the models, so were their stores of knowledge the chief sources on which to draw. What Aristotle had said must be considered the last word as regards physical knowledge. What the classical poets and historians had written must needs be copied, analysed, and praised as the final expression of human thought. Men who under different auspices and in a different atmosphere might perhaps have produced original works of some significance, contented themselves with elaborating anthologies, compiling dictionaries and encyclopædias, and epitomising chronicles of world history from the ancient sources. It is equally characteristic of the time that writers who did attempt creative work found prose romance the most congenial medium for the expression of their ideals. Even this measure of creative enthusiasm chiefly marked the earliest period of the Byzantine era and was stifled by the conservatism of the later epoch.

### A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE SOURCES

But if the reminiscent culture of the Byzantine Empire failed to produce an Herodotus, a Thucydides, or a Livy, it gave to the world, nevertheless, a line of historians and chronologists of the humbler class, beginning with Procopius the secretary of Justinian's general, Belisarius, and ending with Ducas, Phrantzes, Laonicus Chalcocondyles, and Critobulus, the depicters of the final overthrow of Constantinople, who have left us a tolerably complete record of almost the entire life of the Eastern Empire. A list of these historians — numbering about half a hundred names — has been given in our general bibliography of Rome in Volume VI.

Here we shall add only a very brief résumé of the subject, naming the more important authors. For the later period of the undivided Roman Empire and the earlier Byzantine epoch we have, among others, the following works: the history of the war with Attila, bringing the story of the empire to the year 474, by Priscus, a Thracian, and the continuation of his history to the year 480 by Malchus of Philadelphia; the important history of Zosimus, which we have had occasion to quote in an earlier volume; and, most important of all, the historical works of Procopius of Cæsarea in Palestine. The last-named author was, as already mentioned, the secretary of Justinian's famous general, Belisarius. He accompanied that general on many of his campaigns and apparently was associated with him on very intimate terms. This association, together with the character of his writings, has caused Procopius to be spoken of rather generally in later times as the Polybius of the Eastern Empire, — a compliment not altogether unmerited.

His works are by far the most important of the Byzantine histories, partly because of their intrinsic merit and partly because of the character of the epoch with which they deal. The more pretentious of his works has two books on the Persian War, two on the war with the Vandals, and four on the Gothic war. Curiously enough, another work ascribed to Procopius, and now generally admitted to be his, deals with the lives of Justinian and Theodora and to some extent with that of Belisarius himself, in a very different manner from that employed in the other history just mentioned. This so-called secret history was apparently intended for publication after the author's death; it therefore gives vent to the expression of what are probably the true sentiments of the author, showing up the character of his patrons in a very different and much less complimentary light from that in which they are depicted in the earlier work. As an illustration of the difference between the diplomatic and the candid depiction of events this discrepancy of accounts coming from the same pen is of the highest interest. The moral for the historian — vividly illustrative of Sainte-Beuve's famous saying that history is a tradition agreed upon — need hardly be emphasised.

Among the later Byzantine historians the names of John Zonaras, of Nicetas Acominatus, of Nicephorus Gregoras, occur as depicters of the events of somewhat comprehensive periods; Agathias, Simocatta, Epiphaneia, Anna Comnena, and George Phrantzes as biographers or writers on more limited epochs. Of these Anna Comnena in particular is noteworthy because her life of her father Alexius I has been spoken of as the only really artistic historical production of the period. It is popularly known as having supplied Sir Walter Scott with the subject and some of the materials for his last romance, *Count Robert of Paris*. But most noteworthy of all is the fact that this is the first important historical production, so far as is known, that ever came from the pen of a female writer.

The list of chronologies or epitomes of world history includes the *Chronicon Paschale*, and the works of Georgius Syncellus, Malalas, Cedrenus, Michael Glycas, and Constantine Manasses. In some respects more important than any of these were the collections of excerpts from ancient authors which were made by Stobæus, by Photius, and by Suidas. These have preserved many fragments of the writings of historians of antiquity that would otherwise have been altogether lost. A very noteworthy collection of excerpts, comprising in the aggregate a comprehensive history of the world made up from the writings of the Greek historians, forms one portion of the encyclopædia which the emperor Constantine (VII) Porphyrogenitus — himself a writer of

some distinction — caused to be compiled in the tenth century. This work contained extracts, often very extensive, from the writings of most of the Greek classical historians. It was apparently very popular in the Middle Ages, and has been supposed to be responsible for the loss of many of the works from which it made excerpts. Unfortunately, the encyclopædia itself has come down to us only in fragments; but, even so, it gives us excerpts from such writers as Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Diodorus, Nicholas of Damascus, Appian, and Dion Cassius, and of numerous Byzantine histories that are not otherwise preserved.

Taken together, even the extant portions of the Byzantine histories make up a very bulky literature. Being produced in this relatively recent time, a correspondingly large proportion of it has been preserved. Not, indeed, that many of the original manuscripts of the Byzantine historians have come down to us, but they appear to have been copied very extensively by the monks of western Europe, who found in them an interest which the classical writings often failed to arouse. The very fact that so many of these writings epitomise ancient history furnishes, perhaps, the explanation of this popularity. In the day when the reproduction of books was so laborious a process, condensation was naturally a merit that appealed to the bookmaker. Hence, as has been suggested, the epitome was often made to do service for the more elaborate original work, which latter was allowed to drop altogether out of view. But the modern world has not looked upon the Byzantine writings with the same interest. For the most part they had never been translated into modern European languages, and the original texts have been collated, edited, and printed in comparatively recent times.

On the other hand, these writings were almost the first to be subjected to the critical analysis of the historian, working with what we speak of as the modern spirit. Tillemont began the laborious process of reconstructing in detail the chronology of later Roman history, with the aid of these materials, and the work was taken up a little later by Edward Gibbon, and carried to completion in what is incontestably the greatest historical work of modern times, — if not, indeed, the greatest of any age, — *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. In this work, Gibbon not only set an epochal standard for future historians, but he so exhaustively covered the ground as to leave almost nothing for a successor in the same field. His work is the more remarkable because it was produced at a time when the general tendency was to accept the writings of the ancients in a much less critical spirit than that to which they have been more recently subjected. Gibbon, however, vaulted at once to the critical heights. Indeed, he went a step beyond most critics of more recent generations, in that he insisted on applying to the traditions and superstitions of all ancient nations the same critical standards. Most of Gibbon's contemporaries and a large proportion of his successors, until very recent times, while looking askance at the traditions of Greece and Rome, have wished to adjudge Hebrew traditions by a different standard. It has been a curious illustration of the illogicality of even critical minds, that the very critics who have inveighed against the credulity of the ages which could accept the myths of Greece and Rome as historical, should have inveighed also against the mind which had the breadth of view to see that all ancient myths and traditions must be weighed in the same historical balance. Only in our own day have considerable numbers of critics attained the plane of historical impartiality which Gibbon had reached a century and a quarter ago, but in most other regards his example found a readier following.

## THE CHRONOLOGY OF LATER ROMAN HISTORY IN THE EAST

### EARLY DAYS OF THE EASTERN EMPIRE (395–565 A.D.)

The Roman Empire, permanently divided at the death of Theodosius (395) into an eastern and a western section does not, nevertheless, lose its unity as an organisation. The period of disintegration has set in, and the extinction of the western section in 476 is an event in this disintegration rather than the "fall" of an empire. It was not until 800, the year of Charlemagne's accession, that there were really two empires, and that the term "Eastern Empire" may properly be applied. But for convenience we call the history of Arcadius and his successors that of the Eastern Roman Empire.

A.D.

395 **Arcadius**, co-regent, and elder son of Theodosius, continues to reign at Constantinople. The Huns ravage Asia Minor, and the Visigoths, under Alaric, rise in Mœsia and Thrace. At the death of Rufinus, the eunuch Eutropius becomes chief adviser of the emperor, supported by Gainas.

398 Alaric becomes governor of Eastern Illyricum.

399 Death of Eutropius.

401 Death of Gainas. The emperor comes entirely under the influence of his dissolute wife, Eudoxia.

408 **Theodosius II** succeeds his father. He is but seven years of age and is controlled by his sister Pulcheria. Alaric moves upon Rome.

410 Death of Alaric.

421 Theodosius marries Athenais (Eudocia). War breaks out with Persia.

425 Organisation of the University of Constantinople.

438 Publication of the Theodosian Code.

439 Genseric takes Carthage.

441 War with Persia. War with the Huns and Vandals continues.

442 Invasion of Thrace and Macedonia by Attila.

447 Peace of Anatolius made with the Huns.

450 Death of Theodosius. **Marcian** is raised to the throne by Pulcheria, whom he marries. He makes a wise ruler and resists payment of tribute to the Huns.

457 The Theodosian dynasty comes to an end with Marcian. The choice of the emperor rests with the army, and the general Aspar brings about the election of **Leo I**, a native of Thrace.

465 Great fire at Constantinople.

468 With the co-operation of Anthemius, Leo plans a great expedition against Genseric in Africa, but it fails through treachery of Aspar, who is executed, 469.

474 Leo I dies, leaving empire to his grandson **Leo II**. The latter dies the same year and **Zeno**, his father, reigns, but **Basiliscus** at once drives him out and rules for twenty months, when Zeno recovers the throne.

476 With the resignation of Romulus Augustulus the western division is definitely detached from the empire.

478–481 The Ostrogoths invade the Balkan peninsula.

483 Promulgation of the *Henoticon*.

488 Zeno induces Theodoric and the Ostrogoths to leave Illyricum and attack Rome.

491 At death of Zeno, **Anastasius I** is proclaimed emperor, through influence of the empress Ariadne, who marries him.

491–496 The Isaurian War instigated by the supporters of Longinus results favourably for Anastasius.

499 The Bulgarians invade Thrace.

502–505 Unsuccessful war with Persians, who take several provinces.

507 The "Long Wall" of Thrace is built to keep out the Goths.

514 Revolt of Vitalianus.

518 Death of Anastasius; **Justin I**, an illiterate Illyrian peasant, obtains the emperorship through the army. With him the empire enters on a new era. He prepares his nephew Justinian to succeed him.

527 Justinian created augustus.

528 Justin dies; **Justinian I**, "the great," sole monarch. He is the chief figure of his time. His wife is the empress Theodora. He begins active warfare at once against the Arians, Jews, and pagans. Belisarius appointed commander-in-chief in the East.

529 First edition of the Justinian *Code* published.

530 Belisarius defeats the Persians at Dara.

531 Chosroes ascends the Persian throne.

532 Peace made with Persia. Insurrections break out in Constantinople. St. Sophia burned. Belisarius quells the riots.
533 Belisarius begins a campaign against the Vandals in Africa. The *Pandects* published.
534 Belisarius captures the Vandal king Gelimer and destroys his kingdom, and for this is made sole consul.
535–540 Belisarius in Italy and Sicily against the Ostrogoths. He makes himself master of Rome and other cities.
540 Recall of Belisarius. Persian invasion of Syria.
542 Repulse of the Persians. Belisarius degraded by Theodora on his return from the campaign. The great plague.
543 Totila, king of the Goths, captures Naples.
544 Belisarius proceeds to Italy against Totila.
545 Five years' peace with Persia. Totila besieges Rome. Belisarius has not sufficient forces to resist him.
546 Capture of Rome by Totila.
547 Romans recover Rome.
548 Totila retakes Rome. Belisarius returns to Constantinople. Death of Theodora. Conspiracy against Justinian.
549 The imperial armies occupy the lands of the Lazi.
550 Slavonians and Huns invade the empire.
551 Battle of Sinigaglia. The Goths lose Sicily.
552 The eunuch Narses arrives in Italy as commander-in-chief. Recovers Rome. Defeat and death of Totila.
553 End of the Ostrogothic War.
554–557 Terrible earthquakes visit Constantinople and other cities.
558 Belisarius repels the invading Huns under Zabergan.
562 Fifty years' peace with Persia. Narses continues his victorious career in Italy.
565 Death of Justinian.

## FROM JUSTIN II TO THE DEPOSITION OF JUSTINIAN II (565–695 A.D.)

565 **Justin II** succeeds Justinian I. He determines to change Justinian's unpopular system and refuses payment to an embassy of Avars, which is the cause of serious depredations in the provinces.
567 The Gepid kingdom overthrown by Lombards and Avars.
568 Lombard invasion of Italy.
571 Birth of Mohammed.
572 War breaks out with the Persians. They make several important conquests, and
574 Justin, realising his inability to govern, makes Tiberius, the captain of the guard, cæsar.
575 Peace with Persia.
576 Battle of Melitene. The Romans reach the Caspian Sea.
578 Justin dies. **Tiberius** emperor.
581 The imperial army led by Maurice defeats the Persians at Constantina.
582 **Maurice** elected emperor. Death of Tiberius.
584 Treaty with the Avars, whose depredations have become very serious.
586 Roman victory at Solachon.
589 Persian victory at Martyropolis. Slavonic colonies begin to settle in the Peloponnesus.
590 Maurice crowns his son Theodosius at Easter. Rebellion of Vaharan of Persia, who deposes Hormisdas or Hormuz.
591 Maurice puts Chosroes II on the Persian throne. He proceeds against the Avar invasion of Thrace.
602 Rebellion in the army. **Phocas**, the centurion, made emperor. Maurice put to death.
603 War with Persia breaks out.
604 Treaty of peace with the Avars.
606–608 Disastrous invasion of Asia Minor by the Persians. They advance to Chalcedon.
609 Revolts in Africa and Alexandria.
610 **Heraclius**, son of the governor of Africa, accomplishes the overthrow and death of Phocas.
614 The Persian War continues. Damascus captured.
615 Jerusalem taken by the Persians.
616 Persian invasion of Egypt.
617 Occupation of Chalcedon by the Persians. Heraclius contemplates moving to Carthage.
620 Peace made with Avars who have attempted to seize the emperor.
622 Heraclius takes command in person of the Persian War.

622–628 The war is vigorously conducted. Campaigns in Cappadocia, Pontus, Armenia, Cilicia, and Assyria, ending
628 With treaty of peace with Siroes.
629 Heraclius restores the holy cross to Jerusalem.
632 Death of Mohammed.
633 The Mohammedan conquests begin. The imperial cities fall before them in the following order: Bosra (634), Damascus (635), Emesa, Heliopolis, Antioch, Chalcis, Berœa, Edessa (636), Jerusalem (637).
638 Constantine, the king's son, fails in an attempt to recover Syria. Mesopotamia lost to the Mohammedans.
639 Amru invades Egypt.
641 Death of Heraclius. Death of **Constantine III**, after three months' reign. Another son of Heraclius, by Martina, **Heracleonas**, whom Heraclius appointed to reign conjointly with Constantine, reigns alone for five months and then is banished. His brother David is appointed emperor under the name of Tiberius. His fate is unknown. **Constans II**, son of Constantine, becomes emperor. Alexandria taken by the Mohammedans.
647 Mohammedans drive the Romans out of Africa.
648 The *Type* of Constans published.
649 Mohammedans invade Cyprus.
650 They take Aradus.
652 Armenia falls into their hands.
654 They capture Rhodes.
655 They defeat Constans in the great naval battle off Mount Phœnix in Lycia. Pope Martin is banished to the Chersonesus.
658 Campaign of Constans against the Slavs. Peace made with the Mohammedans.
661 Constans leaves Constantinople and spends winter at Athens.
662–663 Great Mohammedan invasion of Asia Minor.
663 Constans in Rome.
668 Mohammedans advance to Chalcedon and hold Amorium for a short time. Assassination of Constans at Syracuse. His son **Constantine (IV) Pogonatus** succeeds.
669 Mohammedans invade Sicily and carry off 180,000 prisoners from Africa.
670 Foundation of Kairwan, near Carthage.
673–677 Mohammedans besiege Constantinople. The Romans use the newly invented Greek fire against them.
678 Peace concluded with the Mohammedans.
679 Bulgarian War and foundation of the Bulgarian kingdom.
681 Constantine deprives his brothers Heraclius and Tiberius of the imperial title. The troops of the Orient had demanded that they, too, should receive the crown, and thus the Trinity in heaven might be represented on earth.
685 **Justinian II** succeeds his father. The caliph and emperor make peace.
687 Transference of the Mardaites from Lebanon to Thrace and Asia Minor.
689–690 Successful expedition of Justinian against the Bulgarians and Slavs. The Greeks are forced to emigrate from Cyprus; two hundred thousand Slavs transported to Asia Minor.
692 Battle of Sebastopolis. Symbatius revolts. Mohammedan subjection of Armenia.

## THE TWENTY YEARS' ANARCHY (695–716 A.D.)

695 In consequence of his cruelties the general Leontius deposes Justinian, cuts off his nose, and banishes him to the Chersonesus. **Leontius** emperor.
697 Revolt of Lazica. Great Mohammedan invasion of Asia Minor. Hassan proceeds against Africa with success. Carthage taken.
698 The Mohammedans retake Carthage. Leontius dethroned. Aspimar becomes emperor as **Tiberius III**. The Mohammedans continue to ravage the empire.
705 **Justinian II**, now named **Rhinotmetus**, from his nasal mutilation, recovers the throne.
709 Tyana falls before the Mohammedans in their ravages on the Bosporus.
710 Great cruelty shown to Ravenna and the Chersonesus by the emperor.
711 Justinian overthrown by Bardanes, who becomes emperor under the name of **Philippicus**. In his reign the Mohammedans invade Spain (711) and the Bulgarians ravage Thrace (712). The Mohammedans take Antioch in Pisidia.
713 Philippicus dethroned and his eyes put out. Artemius his secretary is raised to the emperorship as **Anastasius II**. He tries honestly to bring about reforms, and sends an embassy to Damascus to arrange a peace with the Mohammedans.

715 The army determines to depose Anastasius, and chooses an obscure person, **Theodosius III**, who unwillingly assumes the purple.
716 The Mohammedans again invade Asia Minor and besiege Amorium. **Leo III the Isaurian** relieves the town, makes a truce with the besiegers, and is proclaimed emperor by the army.

## THE ISAURIAN DYNASTY AND SUCCEEDING KINGS (716–820 A.D.)

717 Mohammedans besiege Pergamus. They begin the siege of Constantinople, which is raised the following year.
726 The dispute over image-worship arises. Publication of the first iconoclastic decree. The great iconoclastic schism begins, immersing the empire in many calamities and revolts, leading to the final separation of the Greek and Latin churches.
The Mohammedans invade Cappadocia.
727–728 Revolts in Italy and Greece.
734 Mohammedan invasion of Asia Minor.
739 Battle of Acroinon.
740 **Constantine (V) Capronymus** succeeds his father.
742 Defeat of the rebel Artavasdes, who has obtained possession of Constantinople.
744–747 The Great Plague devastates the empire.
746 Mohammedan invasion of Cyprus.
750 Fall of the Omayyad dynasty. Two rival Saracen powers are formed. Ravenna taken by the Lombards.
751 Capture of Melitene and Theodosipolis by Constantine.
753 Invasion of Italy by Pepin. Council of Constantinople favours iconoclasm.
755 Invasion of Thrace by the Bulgarians. Pepin continues invasion of Italy.
757 The Bulgarians driven back to their own territory with great slaughter.
760–765 Constantine invades Bulgaria. Victory of Anchialus, 762.
766 Wreck of the Roman fleet at the mouth of the Danube. Edicts against image-worship extended and vigorously enforced.
773–774 Campaigns against the Bulgarians. Victory of Lithosoria. Peace made with the Bulgarian monarch, which Constantine breaks.
775 **Leo IV**, son of Constantine, succeeds him. He is a zealous iconoclast. He marries the empress Irene.
778 Successful campaign against the Bulgarians.
780 Capture of Semaluos by Harun-ar-Rashid. Death of Leo. **Irene** becomes regent for the ten-year-old **Constantine VI.**
781 Revolt of Elpidius in Sicily.
782 The Mohammedans under Harun-ar-Rashid invade Asia Minor.
787 Council of Nicæa sanctions image-worship.
788 The Bulgarians gain a victory at the Strymon.
789 The Arabs invade Rumania.
790 Constantine assumes control of the government. Irene is unwilling to relinquish power and a struggle between the two begins.
791 The emperor conducts a campaign against the Bulgarians.
792 A conspiracy formed against Constantine by his uncles is suppressed and severely punished. Irene's dignity restored. Second campaign against the Bulgarians.
795 Constantine divorces his wife Maria and marries Theodota.
796 Third Bulgarian campaign of Constantine.
797 Irene, taking advantage of Constantine's unpopularity on account of his treatment of Maria, imprisons him and has his eyes put out. She now reigns alone. Conspiracy to place one of Constantine V's sons on the throne.
798 Peace made with the Mohammedans.
800 Revival of the western division of the empire by the coronation of Charlemagne. There are now two distinct empires.
802 Conspiracy against and deposition of Irene. **Nicephorus I**, the treasurer, chosen emperor. He maintains political order but is a hard fiscal oppressor.
803 Death of Irene in exile. Bardanes, the general, proclaims himself emperor, but receiving no support, negotiates for his own pardon. Treaty with Charlemagne, regulating confines of the two empires.
806 Humiliating peace with Harun-ar-Rashid.
808 Unsuccessful attempt of Arsaber to obtain throne.
809 Death of Harun-ar-Rashid reopens the struggle with the Mohammedans.
810 Treaty of peace with Charlemagne, who unsuccessfully tries to make the Venetians and their allies tributary to him.

811 The emperor at war with the Mohammedans and Bulgarians. Death of Nicephorus in an attack by the Bulgarians. His son **Stauracius** succeeds. He is unable to hold out against the unpopularity of his father's fiscal severity. After two months' reign, a revolution places **Michael (I) Rhangabe** on the throne. The Mohammedans, owing to civil strife, do not trouble the empire, but the Bulgarians continue their attacks, with such success that

813 Michael is deposed, and the general **Leo (V) the Armenian** is saluted as emperor. Michael retires to a monastery. The Bulgarians approach the walls of Constantinople.

814 Annihilation of the Bulgarian army by Leo, at Mesembria. Thirty years' truce concluded. Leo pursues a variable policy in regard to image-worship.

820 Leo assassinated in a conspiracy in favour of **Michael (II) the Stammerer**, who takes the throne.

## THE AMORIAN DYNASTY (820–867 A.D.)

821 Rebellion of Thomas, a claimant of the throne. He is crowned at Antioch, and lays siege to Constantinople.

822 The Bulgarians, taking advantage of civil discord, invade the empire. Thomas delivered up to Michael, and hanged.

823 The Mohammedans capture Crete.

827 Mohammedan conquest of Sicily begun. It is not completed until 878.

829 **Theophilus** succeeds his father. He is a zealous iconoclast.

831 A Mohammedan invasion of long duration begins.

832 Brilliant victory of Theophilus in Charsiana. The Mohammedans capture Heraclea.

836 Theophilus destroys Zapetra.

838 Mohammedan victory at Dasymon. Amorium is captured.

842 Death of Theophilus, due to chagrin at Mohammedan successes. His son **Michael (III) Porphyrogenitus, or the Drunkard**, succeeds at the age of four, with his mother **Theodora** as regent. Image-worship restored at Council of Constantinople. End of the Iconoclastic controversy. Slavonic insurrection in the Peloponnesus suppressed. Failure of an attempt to conquer the Abasges, and to recover Crete. War with the Mohammedans continues.

845 Truce with the Mohammedans.

847 Conversion of the Khazars to Christianity. The Bulgarians follow their example a few years later.

848 Revolt of the Paulicians, who join the Arabs.

854 Theodora retires to private life.

856 Bardas, her brother, becomes cæsar. Photius elected patriarch in place of the deposed Ignatius.

858 A great war with the Arabs begins. Omar lays Pontus waste. Successful campaign of Leo, the commander-in-chief, who is finally captured by the Mohammedans.

860 Michael badly defeated near Melitene.

862 Omar invades Cappadocia, Pontus, and Cilicia.

863 Battle of Amasia. Great victory of Petronas, the emperor's uncle. Death of Omar. The end of trouble with the Mohammedans for some years.

865 First appearance of the Russians in the empire. They attack Constantinople, but are driven off.

866 Michael kills Bardas with the aid of Basil the Macedonian, who becomes cæsar.

867 Assassination of Michael at the instigation of **Basil**, who takes the throne. Basil removes Photius and restores Ignatius.

## THE BASILIAN DYNASTY (867–1057 A.D.)

871 The Paulicians attacked and reduced to obedience.

872 Basil takes the field against the Mohammedans,

875–876 Victories of Basil in Cilicia.

877 Death of Ignatius. Photius regains the patriarchate.

881 Basil plans to drive the Mohammedans out of Sicily and Italy. Cyprus recovered and held for eleven years.

885 Nicephorus Phocas expels the Mohammedans from Italy. They still hold Sicily. Accusation against Leo, the emperor's son, by Santabaren, in which the former narrowly escapes death.

886 Death of Basil, who is wounded while hunting. His son, **Leo (VI) the Philosopher**, succeeds. He has Santabaren's eyes put out, and banishes him. Photius deposed.

887–888 Arabs invade Asia Minor, and attempt to regain Italy. They give up the attempt on the latter country in 891.

Stylianus, Leo's father-in-law and prime minister, by his treatment of Bulgarian merchants, precipitates a war with Bulgaria. This country wins several victories, and

893 Leo makes a treaty of peace.

895 Conspiracy of Samonas against the emperor. Further Arab invasions of Sicily.

904 The Arabs capture Thessalonica with a fleet. The last remains of the senate's authority destroyed by a constitution of Leo. Second Russian expedition to Constantinople.

911 Mohammedan naval victory off Samos. Death of Leo. His infant son, **Constantine (VII) Porphyrogenitus**, and his brother **Alexander** rule together.

912 Death of Alexander. He nominates, before dying, a regency of six members, exclusive of the patriarch, to act during Constantine's minority. Attempt of Constantine Ducas to gain the throne suppressed by John Eladas, one of the regents. **Zoe Carbonopsina**, mother of Constantine, admitted to supreme power by the regency.

913–914 Simeon, king of Bulgaria, invades the empire with no positive results.

917 The Patzinaks defeat Leo Phocas at Achelous, which causes Romanus Lecapenus to intrigue for the throne.

919 Constantine marries Romanus' daughter Helena. **Romanus (I) Lecapenus** crowned emperor as colleague to Constantine.

920 **Christopher**, son of Romanus, is raised to the imperial dignity.

921 The war with the Bulgarians assumes serious proportions; further increased

923 by an alliance between King Simeon of Bulgaria and the Mohammedans.

926 A temporary end is put to the troubles with the Bulgarians and Arabs by an interview between Romanus and Simeon.

927 Peter, Simeon's successor, enters Byzantine territory, demanding war or the hand of the emperor's granddaughter. Romanus agrees to the latter alternative.

928 Romanus makes his sons, **Stephanus** and **Constantine VIII**, associate emperors. There are now five emperors.

931 Death of Christopher.

934–940 Period of complete peace in the empire, except for petty warfare with Lombard princes. Constantine VII plans to regain the sole power.

941 A Russian fleet of ten thousand galleys appears before Constantinople. Romans drive them off with small force.

944 Stephanus and Constantine VIII at instigation of Constantine VII banish their father to Prota. Constantine VII then regains full power, and banishes Stephanus and Constantine VIII likewise to Prota, 945.

During the remainder of Constantine's reign the war with the Mohammedans is prosecuted with great vigour, especially when Nicephorus Phocas succeeds in assembling a large army. Many conspiracies against Constantine by the deposed emperors.

959 Death of Constantine, the result of poison administered by his son **Romanus II**, who becomes emperor.

961 Brilliant conquest of Crete by Nicephorus. The Mohammedans expelled after occupation of 150 years.

962 Nicephorus attacks Aleppo, but is unable to take the citadel.

963 Death of Romanus, which has been attributed to poison administered by the empress Theophano. **Nicephorus (II) Phocas** marries Theophano and obtains the throne. His chief aim is to break the Mohammedan power.

964–965 Conquest of Tarsus by the Byzantines. Nicephorus recalled to Constantinople by troubles with Bulgarians and Hungarians. To repel them he makes alliance with Sviatoslaff, prince of Kieff, which causes a bloody war with the Russians.

965 Embassy of Liutprand to Constantinople. The emperor imprisons him.

968 Nicephorus returns to Asia Minor and recovers Antioch, 328 years in the Mohammedan power. He prepares to attack Baghdad.

969 Joannes Zimisces, the general, and Theophano conspire against Nicephorus, who is assassinated. **Joannes (I) Zimisces** takes the throne. He associates with him the young sons of Romanus II, **Basil II**, and **Constantine IX**, who were nominal rulers during reign of Nicephorus. The brother of Nicephorus, Leo, and his son Bardas Phocas make unsuccessful attempts to invite rebellion and regain the throne. They are banished.

970 Sviatoslaff conquers Bulgaria and invades Thrace. Philippopolis taken and inhabitants massacred.

971 Joannes proceeds against the Russians. Capture of Presthlava and King Boris of Bulgaria. Siege and capture of Dorystolon. Peace with the Russians. Bulgaria again a part of the empire and Boris a pensioner of the Byzantine court. The Mohammedan wars carried on.

972 Marriage of Otto the Great and Theophano, daughter of Romanus II.
973 Imperial victory at Nisibis. Defeat at Amida.
974 Joannes takes command of the Mohammedan War.
975 Many victories but futile siege of Tripolis. Antioch shuts out the imperial force.
976 Death of Joannes Zimisces, probably by poison. **Basil II** head of affairs with his brother for colleague. He is one of the greatest of the Eastern emperors.

*Beginning of Period of Greatest Splendour of the Empire*

979 Defeat of Sclerus by Bardas Phocas, the general, after a desperate revolt to capture the throne. The Bulgarians begin a long struggle to regain their independence.
982 On death of Otto, Basil consolidates his authority in southern Italy.
989 Death of Bardas Phocas, who for two years has been in revolt against the emperor. Sclerus, conspiring for the second time against the throne, dies.
991 Southern Iberia ceded to the empire by King David.
995 Campaign of Basil in Syria. Aleppo taken. Unsuccessful attack on Tripolis.
996 Great defeat of King Samuel of Bulgaria at the Sperchius.
1002 Samuel invades Thrace, takes Hadrianopolis, but is driven off. The war now proceeds for some years in desultory fashion.
1014 Basil resumes the Bulgarian War in earnest. Great victory under Nicephorus Xiphias at Zetunium. Basil puts out the eyes of 15,000 prisoners. Death of Samuel. The emperor's cruelty engenders a last effort in the Bulgarians, but by 1018 the destruction of the kingdom is complete. Gibbon calls this the most important triumph of Roman arms since the time of Belisarius.
1022 Victory of Basil over a coalition of Armenian princes. They sue for peace.
1025 Basil prepares to expel Mohammedans from Sicily, but dies. His brother **Constantine IX** becomes sole emperor.
1027 Attack by the Patzinaks and Mohammedans repulsed.
1028 Constantine on his deathbed appoints **Romanus (III) Argyrus** his successor, makes him divorce his wife, and marry his daughter Zoe.
1030 Romanus defeated by the Mohammedans at Azaz and takes refuge in Antioch. He becomes the prey of melancholy, and Zoe takes the reins of government.
1031 Mohammedan pirates ravage Illyricum and Corfu. They are driven off by the people of Ragusa.
1032 Conspiracy and death of Constantine Diogenes.
1033 Capture of Edessa by the imperial fleet.
1034 Death of Romanus, probably by slow poison administered by Zoe, who now causes her paramour, **Michael (IV) the Paphlagonian**, to be proclaimed emperor, and marries him the day of her husband's death. Earthquake at Jerusalem lasting forty days. Great famine throughout the empire.
1037 The Mohammedans attack the empire on all sides. They capture Edessa. The Patzinaks invade Thrace.
1038 The Mohammedans regain Edessa, by a stratagem that is the origin of the Tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.
1039 The imperial force and the Normans attack the Mohammedans in Sicily. Messina (Messana) and Syracuse taken.
1040 A fresh Mohammedan army from Africa utterly defeated in Sicily. The Norman power begins to get the control in the island. The Bulgarians attempt to recover independence. They invade Thrace and Macedonia.
1041 Michael drives them back and brings the country again to Byzantine rule. Death of Michael. **Zoe** attempts to rule alone, but finds herself unequal to the task. She adopts her husband's nephew, **Michael (V) Calaphates**, and makes him emperor. He expels Zoe. At his imprudent acts the people rise in rebellion.
1042 After a fierce battle between the people of Constantinople and the adherents of Michael, the latter and his uncle flee. **Zoe** and her sister **Theodora** are proclaimed co-empresses. Zoe has the eyes of Michael and his uncle put out. Jealous of her sister, Zoe marries **Constantine (X) Monomachus**. Rebellion of Maniaces, brother of Constantine's mistress Sclerena. He is murdered in the midst of his camp.
1043 Invasion of the Russians; driven back after a defeat by Catacalon.
1045 Successful war with Cacicus, vassal king of Armenia and Iberia, ending in destruction of his kingdom.
1047 Rebellion of Tornicius.
1048 The Patzinaks invade the empire with a large army. Attack of the Seljuk Turks under Toghril. Indecisive battle of Capetron.

1050 Toghril retires to Persia. Death of Zoe.
1052 Second invasion of Toghril.
1053 The Patzinaks driven back to their own territory.
1054 The great schism between the Greek and Roman churches begins. Death of Michael. **Theodora** reigns alone.
1056 Death of Theodora, after appointing **Michael (VI) Stratioticus** her successor. Attempt of Theodosius Monomachus to seize throne.
1057 Battle of Hades. Defeat of Michael by Isaac Comnenus and Catacalon.

## DECLINE AND FALL OF THE BYZANTINE GOVERNMENT (1057–1204 A.D.)

1057 **Isaac (I) Comnenus** proclaimed emperor. Michael retires to a monastery. The emperor introduces a system of great economy into all branches of the government.
1059 Invasion of the northern frontier by Hungarians and Patzinaks. Treaty of peace concluded. Isaac, after a severe illness, resigns crown into the hands of **Constantine (XI) Ducas**. Through motives of economy the latter materially reduces the size of the army.
1060–1064 Toghril Beg and Alp Arslan invade the empire from Mesopotamia. Ani captured, 1064.
1064 The Uzes, a nomad Turkish tribe, invade from the north. They are driven back by outbreak of the plague.
1067 Death of Constantine. The imperial title conferred on his young sons, **Michael (VII) Ducas Parapinaces Andronicus**, and **Constantine (XII) Ducas**. The empress **Eudocia** is regent. She marries **Romanus (IV) Diogenes**, who is proclaimed as emperor. Great ravage of the Turks. Massacre of Cæsarea.
1068–1069 Successful campaign of Romanus against the Turks.
1070 Manuel Comnenus takes command against the Turks. Alp Arslan captures Manzicert. Romanus returns to the command.
1071 Byzantine expedition to Sicily defeated by Normans. Surrender of Bari. End of the imperial authority in Italy. Romanus taken prisoner by Alp Arslan at Manzicert. Restored to liberty and makes a treaty of peace. Refused admittance to Constantinople. Michael VII regains power reigning conjointly with Constantine XII. Romanus blinded, dies of his wounds.
1072 Alp Arslan, unable to obtain payment of Romanus' ransom, invades empire. He finally conquers the Byzantine part of Asia Minor, giving it to Suleiman to rule.
1074 Rebellion of Ursel. Treaty with the Turks.
1076 The Turks take possession of Jerusalem.
1078 Bryennius attempts to gain the throne. After a severe struggle Michael abdicates in favour of **Nicephorus (III) Botaniates**.
1081 Nicephorus, after a constant struggle with many aspirants, is dethroned by **Alexius (I) Comnenus** after the capture and sack of Constantinople. Many pretenders are put down. Treaty of peace with Suleiman. Defeat of Alexius by Robert Guiscard.
1084 Defeat of Bohemond, the Norman leader. Relief of Larissa.
1085 Alexius recovers Dyrrhachium from the Normans.
1087–1099 Patzinak war ending in imperial victory at Levounion.
1092 Tzachas, emir of Smyrna, assumes title of emperor.
1093 Murder of Tzachas at instigation of Alexius.
1096 The first crusaders appear at Constantinople.
1097–1098 With the help of the crusaders, Alexius regains Nicæa, Antioch, and the whole of Asia Minor.
1103–1108 War of Alexius with Bohemond, prince of Antioch.
1110–1116 War against the Turks in Asia Minor, ending in many Turkish losses, enabling Alexius to make treaty of peace.
1111 Hostilities of Alexius with Tancred and the crusaders.
1118 Death of Alexius. **Joannes Comnenus**, his son, succeeds. Failure of conspiracy of Anna Comnena and Nicephorus Bryennius to place latter on throne.
1119 Joannes takes Laodicea and
1120 Sozopolis in campaigns against the Turks.
1122 Great victory of Joannes over the Patzinaks in Macedonia.
1124 Joannes drives back the Servians who have seized Belgrade and Branitzova. He now proceeds again against the Turks of Iconium and holds Castamonia and Gangra for a short time.
1131 Campaign against Livo of Cilicia, whose dominions
1137 are united to the empire.
1138 Joannes proceeds against Raymond of Antioch, who refuses to recognise him for his

liege-lord. Raymond apologises and helps Joannes in a successful campaign against the Turks in Syria.
1141 Joannes defeats the sultan of Iconium.
1142 He sets out for Cilicia to conquer all the Latin principalities taken from the empire, but
1143 dies as the result of a wound received while hunting. His son **Manuel (I) Comnenus** succeeds.
1144 Raymond, prince of Antioch, compelled to renew bonds of vassalage.
1145 Manuel invades Isauria and concludes treaty of peace with Turks.
1147 Manuel promises to aid the Second Crusade, but gives secret information of it to the Turks.
1148 War with Roger of Sicily, who attempts to invade Greece. Manuel quickly repels an invasion of Patzinaks, and with the help of Venice proceeds against the Normans at Corfu.
1149 Fortress at Corfu taken. Roger invites the Hungarians and Servians to attack from the north.
1152 Imperial repulse in Cilicia, but great successes in Italy.
1153 Peace made with King Geisa of Hungary.
1153–1155 The Norman war turns against the empire. Many defeats. Maius, the Sicilian admiral, lands at Constantinople.
1155 Peace made with William of Sicily, Roger's successor. Punishment of Reynolf of Antioch, successor of Raymond, and his reduction to vassalage.
1157 Renewal of war with sultan of Iconium. Peace made.
1161 War breaks out with Stephen III of Hungary.
1163 Short interval of peace in Hungarian War.
1168 Battle of Zeugmin. Great imperial victory. End of Hungarian War. Manuel joins with Almeric of Jerusalem in an attack on Egypt.
1171 Failure of attack through jealousy of Almeric. War with Venice over, Manuel attacks the Lombards. After an unprofitable contest
1174 peace made with Venice.
1176 Renewal of war with Kilidj-Arslan, sultan of Iconium. Crushing defeat of Manuel near Myriocephalus. Dishonourable peace made by Manuel.
1177 Manuel breaks peace. Imperial victory on the Mæander. Honourable peace.
1180 Death of Manuel. His son, **Alexius (II) Comnenus**, succeeds, under guardianship of mother, Maria of Antioch.
1183 **Andronicus (I) Comnenus** usurps the throne after inducing Alexius to have his mother put to death, and then killing him. Marries Alexius' widow, Agnes, daughter of Louis VII of France.
1184 Isaac, sent to Cyprus to govern by the emperor, causes rebellion by his misgovernment, which entirely separates the island from the empire.
1185 Sicilian invasion at instigation of Greek fugitives. William II destroys Thessalonica, but is induced to desist from attack on Constantinople. The lieutenant, Hagiochristophorites, incites rebellion at Constantinople against Isaac. The people take Isaac's part and proclaim him emperor. Death of Andronicus at hands of mob. **Isaac (II) Angelus** emperor. Victory at Demerize over Sicilian invaders.
1186 Rebellion of the Bulgarians and Wallachians owing to unjust taxation.
1187 Defeat of rebels by Joannes Cantacuzenus. Alexius Branas given command of army. He takes advantage of victories to proclaim himself emperor and appears before Constantinople, but is defeated and killed by Isaac's brother-in-law, Conrad of Montferrat. William II of Sicily gives up his conquests in Greece.
1188 Wallachian successes lead to formation of independent kingdom.
1189 Emperor Frederick I of Germany appears with 150,000 crusaders. The terrified Isaac offers to make alliance with Saladin, but the latter declines.
Theodore Mancaphas proclaims himself emperor. He is pardoned, and gives up claim. Careers of the "False Alexius" and other pretenders.
1191 Capture of Cyprus by Richard I of England. It is lost forever to the empire.
1194 Isaac recognises the Wallachian kingdom.
1195 Isaac deposed by the nobles, and his brother **Alexius (III) Angelus-Comnenus** "the tyrant" made emperor. Alexius has Isaac's eyes put out, and imprisons him in a Constantinople dungeon. Alexius' extravagant conduct completes the destruction of the financial mechanism of the Roman Empire. Great disorder and anarchy throughout the empire.
1197 Peace purchased from Mueddin, sultan of Angora.
1198 War with the sultan of Iconium.
1199 Rebellion of Chryses, the Wallachian officer. Alexius makes peace, leaving him in possession of several towns.
1200 Ivan the Bulgarian attempts to found independent monarchy in Thrace and Macedonia.

1202 Alexius, son of Isaac II, escaping to Italy, brings about treaty between Venetians and crusaders to replace Isaac and himself on the throne.
1203 Siege of Constantinople. Flight of Alexius III to Italy. Crusaders occupy the city. **Isaac III** and **Alexius (IV) Angelus** on the throne. Great fire in Constantinople. Constant trouble between Alexius and the crusaders, in consequence of which
1204 **Alexius (V) Ducas "Murzuphlus,"** a party leader, seizes the throne. Murder of Alexius IV. Isaac dies of grief. Alexius finds it impossible to hold out against the crusaders. Capture and sack of Constantinople by crusaders and Venetians. Treaty of partition. End of true Byzantine Empire. The Latin Empire of Romania founded with Baldwin, count of Flanders. The Greek Empire continues at Nicæa.

## THE LATIN EMPIRE OF ROMANIA (1204–1261 A.D.)

1204 **Baldwin I** elected emperor. His dominions consist only of Constantinople and Thrace, for the rest of the empire is divided among the Flemish, French, and Venetian leaders.
1205 Joannice of Bulgaria revolts, and obtains possession of Hadrianopolis. Capture of Baldwin in siege of town. He dies in captivity. His brother **Henry I** succeeds.
1206 Treaty with David Comnenus, brother of the emperor of Trebizond, in the interest of the latter.
1207 Death of Joannice. Henry marries his daughter, and thus effects peace with Bulgaria. Treaty with Theodore Lascaris, emperor of Nicæa.
1209 Parliament of Ravenika (ancient Chalcidice) summoned by Henry to determine definitely the feudal relations of all subjects of the empire.
1214 War between Henry and Theodore. Defeat of Henry in Bithynia. Siege of Pemanene. Peace, ceding to Theodore all territory east of Sardis and Nicæa.
1215 A mock union between the Greek and Roman churches in Henry's dominions.
1216 Death of Henry during expedition against Theodore, the despot of Epirus. **Pierre de Courtenai**, then in France, chosen emperor. He falls into the hands of Theodore of Epirus on his way to Constantinople, and dies in captivity, 1219.
1221 His second son, **Robert de Courtenai**, after a delay of two years, is made emperor.
1222 Theodore of Epirus takes possession of the Lombard kingdom of Thessalonica. Defeat of Robert at Serres.
1223–1224 Robert invades Nicæa with many losses. Revolt of the Greeks in Hadrianopolis. Theodore of Epirus takes the city.
1228 Death of Robert. His young brother, **Baldwin II**, succeeds. **Jean de Brienne**, titular king of Jerusalem, elected guardian and colleague. The empire is attacked by Joannes Vatatzes of Nicæa and John Asan, king of Bulgaria.
1233 Jean de Brienne routed in Bithynia.
1234 Alliance between Vatatzes and Asan to attack Constantinople. They ravage the whole Latin Empire.
1236 Danger to Constantinople averted by help from the Venetians and Geoffrey of Achaia.
1237 Death of Jean de Brienne. The Bulgarian king abandons Nicæa and makes alliance with Latins. Baldwin visits western Europe to obtain help. Louis IX of France gives pecuniary assistance.
1240 Baldwin with his new army attacks Nicæa and obtains some advantage.
1243 Baldwin makes alliance with Seljuk Turks, but in spite of this is compelled to
1245 revisit western Europe for assistance.
1259 On the accession of Michael Palæologus, the Nicæan Empire attacks the Latin Empire.
1261 Recovery of Constantinople by the Greeks of Nicæa. End of the Latin Empire of Romania. Although driven from their dominions, the descendants of Baldwin II are known in eastern Europe as titular emperors until 1383 when, with the death of James de Baux, the family of Baldwin became extinct.

## THE GREEK EMPERORS AT NICÆA (1204–1261 A.D.)

1204 After the capture of Constantinople Theodore Lascaris, leader of the anti-Latin party, flees to Bithynia, and makes himself master of the city of Nicæa.
1206 **Theodore (I) Lascaris** crowned emperor by the Greek patriarch. His title is contested by several princes, among them Alexius Comnenus, reigning as emperor of Trebizond. David Comnenus, the latter's brother, proceeds against him, but is badly defeated on the Sangarius,

1210 Alexius, father-in-law of Theodore, claims throne, supported by the sultan of Iconium. The latter slain in battle, Alexius falls into Theodore's hand, and is put into a monastery.
1214 War with Henry of Romania. Peace defining limits of empire.
1214–1222 Years of peace.
1222 Death of Theodore. His son-in-law, **Joannes (III) Ducas Vatatzes**, succeeds. Theodore Angelus, despot of Epirus and Ætolia, assumes title of emperor of Thessalonica.
1224 Victory of Pemanene over Robert, the Latin emperor.
1225 Peace with the Latins. Conspiracy of Nestongos.
1233 Defeat of the Latins by Joannes in Bithynia. Naval campaign to obtain sovereignty of the sea. The Greek fleets driven back to Asia by the Venetian, Marino Sanuti.
1234 Alliance of Joannes Vatatzes and Asan of Bulgaria against Baldwin II. Vatatzes reduces the empire of Thessalonica to a despotat (despotat of Epirus).
1236 Attack of the allies on Constantinople unsuccessful.
1237 Asan breaks the alliance as Constantinople is about to be attacked the second time.
1241 On the death of John Asan of Bulgaria, Vatatzes begins to assert his supremacy over the emperor of Thessalonica.
1242 Joannes Comnenus, the Thessalonian emperor, reduced to rank of despot by Vatatzes. Alliance with the sultan of Iconium to resist threatened invasion of Mongols who have already destroyed the Seljuk empire.
1245 Joannes Vatatzes reconquers Byzantine dominions in Thrace from the infant king Michael of Bulgaria.
1246 Vatatzes unites despotat of Epirus to the empire.
1251–1253 War with Michael II, despot of Epirus, ending in a peace ceding some Thracian territory to Vatatzes.
1254 Death of Joannes Vatatzes. His son **Theodore (II) Lascaris** succeeds.
1255–1256 War with Bulgaria resulting in slight concessions to Theodore.
1257 War with Michael of Epirus conducted by Michæl Palæologus, with unfavourable results.
1258 Death of Theodore. Succeeded by his young son **Joannes (IV) Lascaris**. The prime minister Muzalon and the patriarch Arsenius are regents.
1259 **Michael (VIII) Palæologus** proclaimed emperor as the result of a successful conspiracy. Muzalon murdered. The emperor goes to war with Michael of Epirus and puts him to flight. Battle of Pelagonia. Capture of William Villehardouin, prince of Achaia.
1261 The general Strategopulus captures Constantinople. Fall of the Latin Empire Michael removes the seat of empire thither.

## THE PALÆOLOGUS DYNASTY AT CONSTANTINOPLE (1261–1453 A.D.)

1261 Michael imprisons Joannes IV and has his eyes put out. For this Arsenius excommunicates Michael. Important commercial treaty with the Genoese renewed after hostilities in 1275. Pope Urban IV frees Villehardouin from his promises to Michael on his release. Warfare results.
1263 Urban IV mediates between Michael and Villehardouin.
1264 Peace between the emperor and Michael of Epirus.
1265 Deposition of Arsenius causing the Arsenite schism.
1269 Charles of Anjou, aided by Joannes of Thessaly and Michael of Epirus, takes up arms against the emperor to restore Baldwin II.
1271 Great defeat of the imperial forces at Demetriades (Volo). Constantinople in danger. Michael proposes union of Greek and Latin churches as a means of saving his throne.
1274 Union of churches effected at council of Lyons. It is opposed by a large faction in the Greek church. This union is never really completed, and falls to pieces at Michael's death.
1281 Treaty of Orvietto between the pope, Naples, and Venice to conquer the Greek Empire for Philip, son of Baldwin II. The plan is frustrated by the Sicilian Vespers.
1282 Death of Michael in an expedition against Joannes Ducas of Thessaly. He is a conspicuous example of the misuse of despotic power. His son **Andronicus (II) Palæologus** succeeds. Ecclesiastical troubles compel the emperor to neglect military matters for a time.
1290 Unsuccessful attack upon Nicephorus of Epirus.
1295 **Michael IX**, son of Andronicus, receives the imperial title from his father.
1301 Foundation of Ottoman Empire by Osman, who attacks the Greek Empire. Disgraceful defeat of Greeks commanded by Michael, near Nicomedia. The command

given to a Tatar chief. The Ottomans gradually conquer all the Byzantine possessions in Asia.

1303 The Catalan Grand Company, engaged by Michael to help fight the Turks, and headed by Roger de Flor, lands in Constantinople.

1304 Relief of Philadelphia by Roger. He conceives the idea of forming a principality in the East.

1305 Roger de Flor visits Constantinople to demand pay for his men.

1306 Turks retake Philadelphia. Plan of Ferdinand of Majorca to conquer a kingdom in the Greek Empire.

1307 Roger de Flor created cæsar. He sets out for Asia but is assassinated. The company breaks its ties with Michael, and sets out to conquer territory for itself. Battle of Apros. The company takes possession of several districts. Excommunication of Andronicus by Clement V.

1310 The company and their Turkish auxiliaries enter service of the duke of Athens. Conquest of Rhodes by knights of St. John.

1311 Battle of the Cephisus and victory of the Catalan Grand Company over the duke of Athens pave way for the conquest of Attica. The Turkish auxiliaries return home.

1315 Victory of Philes Palæologus over Turks at Bizya.

1320 The emperor Michael dies.

1321 Beginning of civil war by partisans of the emperor's grandson Andronicus led by Cantacuzenus and Synadenus.

1322 Peace of Epibates concludes civil war.

1325 Andronicus compelled to bestow imperial crown on his grandson **Andronicus (III) Palæologus**; the two reign together.

1327 Andronicus II brings charges against Andronicus III. Civil war breaks out again.

1328 Synadenus overcomes garrison of Constantinople. Abdication of Andronicus II puts an end to civil war, but the court remains full of intrigue.

1329 Imperial defeat at Pelekanon by the Ottoman Orkhan.

1330 Surrender of Nicæa to Orkhan.

1330–1337 Ottoman invasions of the European provinces.

1334–1337 Expedition of Andronicus into Epirus.

1337 The Mongols cross the Danube and ravage northern district. **Anne** regent for Nicephorus II, despot of Epirus, turns the despotat over to Andronicus.

1338 Surrender of Nicomedia to Orkhan.

1339 Revolt in the despotat of Epirus put down.

1341 Death of Andronicus. His young son **Joannes (V) Palæologus** succeeds with Empress **Anne** of Savoy as regent. Rebellion of the prime minister **Joannes (VI) Cantacuzenus**, who is proclaimed emperor and guardian of Joannes. He often calls himself Joannes V. Apocauchus and Joannes Apri intrigue against Cantacuzenus. A long civil struggle commences.

1342 Stephen Dushan of Servia allies himself with rebels and invades empire.

1343 Cantacuzenus makes alliance with Turks. The war continues with violence.

1344 Cantacuzenus takes Gratianopolis and makes treaties with Servia and Bulgaria.

1345 Murder of Apocauchus. Vicinity of Constantinople devastated.

1346 Defection of Orkhan from Anne's cause leads to triumph of Cantacuzenus. Earthquake at Constantinople destroys portion of St. Sophia.

1347 Treaty of Cantacuzenus with Anne recognises right of former to rule for ten years. The Black Death rages.

1350 Cantacuzenus uses money sent by Russians to rebuild St. Sophia to pay Ottoman mercenaries.

1351 Joannes V takes up arms against Cantacuzenus.

1352 Peace with Genoa after three years' war. Cantacuzenus hires Turkish mercenaries to fight Bulgarians and Servians.

1353 Cantacuzenus proclaims his son Matthæus emperor, and a deadly strife between him and the Palæologus family ensues.

1354 Cantacuzenus dethroned. Joannes V sole emperor. Matthæus Cantacuzenus continues civil war.

1357 Matthæus Cantacuzenus delivered to Joannes by his captors the Servians and made to renounce all rights to the throne.

1361 The Ottoman Turks under Murad I take Hadrianopolis. This seals the fate of the Greek Empire.

1363 The Ottomans take Philippolis and Serres. Defeat of Louis of Hungary.

1369–1370 Joannes visits Rome to obtain help for his falling empire, but is unsuccessful. On way home is arrested for debt in Venice and released with money raised by his son, Manuel.

1375 Andronicus, Joannes' eldest son, conspires against him while the emperor is absent on

a visit to Murad. He is aided by Saugdi, eldest son of Murad. Murad hastens to Europe and quells rebellion. Both Andronicus and Saugdi have their eyes put out.
1377 Andronicus escapes from prison, imprisons his father, and confers title on his own son.
1381 Joannes rescued by Venetians under Carlo Zeno. Concludes treaty with Andronicus, recognising his and his son's rights to the title. Treaty with Murad in which Joannes acknowledges himself the vassal of the Ottoman Empire.
1384 Manuel, second son of Joannes, proclaimed emperor and crowned.
1389 Battle of Kossova. Great Ottoman victory over the Servians. Assassination of Murad. Bajazet succeeds, renews treaty with Joannes, and puts Manuel at head of Greek troops in Ottoman army.
1390 Ottomans capture Philadelphia the last independent Greek community in Asia Minor.
1391 Death of Joannes. **Manuel (II) Palæologus** sole emperor. He hastens to Constantinople, fearing his brother will seize the crown.
1396 Great victory of Bajazet at Nicopolis. He now determines to proceed against Constantinople. Manuel visits France for help.
1398 Marshal Boucicault arrives at Constantinople with his fleet. The Tatar conqueror, Timur, distracts Bajazet's attention from the empire.
1399 Joannes of Selymbria, son of Andronicus, enters Constantinople and is proclaimed emperor. Manuel visits European courts for help.
1402 Manuel returns home, his mission unsuccessful. Battle of Angora. Crushing defeat of Bajazet by Timur.
1403 Treaty of Suleiman and Manuel, the former yielding up territory in Macedonia and Thessaly.
1410 Musa, Suleiman's brother, after the latter's death, reconquers territory ceded by Suleiman to Manuel.
1412 Musa begins a feeble siege of Constantinople, but is soon distracted by civil troubles.
1413–1421 During reign of Muhammed I, the Greek Empire enjoys uninterrupted peace. Manuel employs time in reorganising administration and consolidating his power.
1419 Manuel makes his son, **Joannes (VII) Palæologus**, co-emperor.
1422 Murad II besieges Constantinople to punish Manuel for his intrigues. He is obliged to raise siege in order to proceed against his brother, Mustapha.
1423 Manuel assumes monastic habit, taking name of Matthew. Joannes sole emperor. The empire is now reduced to the city of Constantinople and vicinity, Thessalonica, and a part of the Peloponnesus. The finances are exhausted through payment of tribute to the Turks. The empire enters its final stage of lethargy.
1430 Murad II conquers Thessalonica. The Genoese of Galata attack Constantinople on account of trade dispute in Black Sea.
1431 Terrible epidemic in Constantinople.
1439 Joannes and the Greek patriarch attend council of Florence and ratify union of the Greek and Roman church. The pope promises to aid the empire, but forgets agreement to send fleet to Constantinople.
1440 On return of the emperor, the bishop of Ephesus succeeds in confining the union only to the palace. The emperor's brother Demetrius attempts to gain throne, but fails.
1447 Murad marches against the emperor's brother Constantine, who is ruling over the Peloponnesus. Corinth and Patras taken. Treaty with Constantine, who pays tribute.
1448 Death of Joannes. His brother **Constantine (XIII) Palæologus** or **Dragases**, despot of Sparta, succeeds.
1449 Muhammed II succeeds Murad II. His chief ambition is the conquest of Constantinople, and he at once prepares for it. Builds a fort on the Bosporus.
1452 Joannes appeals to Pope Nicholas V for aid. Cardinal Isidore and a small body of auxiliaries are sent.
1453 Siege and capture of Constantinople by Muhammed II. Death of Constantine in battle. Muhammed enters his new capital. End of the Eastern Empire.

## THE EMPIRE OF TREBIZOND (1204–1461 A.D.)

Isaac Angelus, as soon as he is placed on the throne by the exasperated mob that slew the tyrannical Andronicus I (1185), has the eyes of Manuel Comnenus, the murdered emperor's eldest son, put out. Manuel dies under the operation, leaving two sons, Alexius and David. They live in obscurity in Constantinople until the crusaders besiege the capital (1203), when they escape to the coast of Colchis. Alexius gathers around him a small force and
1204 about the time of the fall of Constantinople enters Trebizond, the ancient Trapezus,

on the Black Sea, having been proclaimed "emperor of the Romans." He calls himself **Alexius (I) Grand-Comnenus**, to distinguish himself from the family of Alexius Angelus-Comnenus. The weakness of the expelled house of Angelus permits Alexius to found his empire and begin a career of conquest. In the course of a few months the whole country from the Phasis to the Thermodon is his. David Comnenus adds the coast from Sinope to Heraclea to the new empire.

1206 Defeat of David on the Sangarius, by Theodore (I) Lascaris. Alexius badly beaten at Amisus by the sultan of Iconium or Rum in league with Theodore. David makes treaty with the emperor Henry of Romania, in the interest of his possessions.

1214 Theodore I attempts to reunite David's territory to the empire of Nicæa. Death of David in defence of Sinope, besieged and captured by the Turks. Pontus assailed by the Turks. Colchis by the Georgians.

1216 Alexius compelled to declare himself a vassal of the sultan of Iconium.

1222 Death of Alexius. His son-in-law, **Andronicus (I) Ghidus**, succeeds. Joannes the eldest son being passed over.

1224 Treaty with Ala ad-Din, sultan of Iconium. Hayton, Turkish governor of Sinope, seizes a Trebizontine ship. Andronicus attacks Sinope; Ala ad-Din breaks treaty and attacks Trebizond. Andronicus drives him off and by a treaty frees himself from vassalage.

1226 Andronicus acknowledges himself vassal of Gela ad-Din, shah of Khwarizm.

1230 On defeat of Gela ad-Din by the Mongols, Andronicus renews vassalage to Iconium. The Iberian provinces of Trebizond unite with the new Iberian kingdom where King David still retains his independence against the Turks.

1235 Death of Andronicus. His brother-in-law, **Joannes (I) Auxuchus**, succeeds.

1238 Death of Joannes. His brother, **Manuel (I) the Great Captain**, succeeds. There is little information about the events of his reign, but he was a vassal of the Seljuks; and, after their defeat, in 1244, at Kusadac of the Mongol khan, Octar.

1263 **Andronicus II** succeeds his father.

1266 **George** succeeds his brother. The power of the Monguls and Seljuks in Asia Minor declines, and George frees himself from them. He attempts to conquer more territory but in

1280 is deserted by his nobles on an expedition and captured by the Turkomans. **Joannes III** succeeds. He is invited by a party in Constantinople, disgusted at Michael VIII's union with the Latin church, to place himself at the head of the orthodox Christians and of the Greek Empire; but Joannes fears to do this.

1281 Michael sends George Acropolita, the historian, on a mission to Joannes to induce him to lay aside title of emperor of the Romans or accept matrimonial alliance with his family. It is unsuccessful. An insurrection at Trebizond deprives Joannes of his power, but he soon recovers it.

1282 Joannes agrees to marry Michael's daughter Eudocia. The ceremony is performed at Constantinople, and Joannes gives up title "emperor of the Romans," taking that of "emperor of all the East, Iberia, and Peratea." David of Iberia makes an unsuccessful attack on Trebizond. George released by Turkomans, but fails in an attempt to regain throne.

1285 Joannes' sister, **Theodora**, assembles an army and mounts throne, but Joannes soon recovers it and drives her from it. Pope Nicholas IV invites Joannes to assist in crusade to recover Ptolemais, but affairs at home prevent his doing so.

1297 Death of Joannes. His son **Alexius II** succeeds at age of fifteen. He soon frees himself from his guardian, Andronicus II of Constantinople.

1302 Alexius repels a Turkoman invasion in a great battle near Kerasunt.

1310 After many trade disputes with the Genoese establishments on the Black Sea, Genoa demands a favourable treaty with Alexius, which he refuses. The enraged Genoese burn a portion of Trebizond, but fear of the Venetians compels them to agree to trading on the old terms.

1314 Sinopian pirates set fire to Trebizond and much damage is done.

1330 Death of Alexius. His eldest son, **Andronicus III**, succeeds. A period of anarchy and civil war begins. Andronicus supposed to have put two brothers to death. Another brother and an uncle flee to Constantinople.

1332 Death of Andronicus. Accession of his young son, **Manuel II**, with everyone in power attempting to gain the direction of affairs. Taking advantage of the condition of affairs the Turkomans invade the empire, which is in great danger, and **Basil**, the fugitive son of Alexius II, is invited to become emperor. Manuel deposed. Basil proves a profligate monarch, and marries his mistress in spite of the fact that he has a wife. The power becomes decentralised.

1340 Death of Basil. His lawful wife, **Irene Palæologina**, daughter of the Byzantine emperor, is placed on the throne by her adherents. Civil war breaks out.

1341 **Anna Anachoulu**, daughter of Alexius II, is placed by the Comnenian party on the throne. Irene deposed. Michael, second son of Joannes II, claims throne. He is imprisoned, but a party forms around his son, Joannes.
1342 **Joannes III** gains throne from Anna. She is strangled.
1344 Disgusted with Joannes' conduct the young nobles release his father, **Michael**, from prison and make him emperor. Michael confines Joannes in a monastery, and afterwards sends him to Hadrianopolis. He tries to improve the condition of affairs and decrease the power of the nobles, but is not strong enough for the task.
1347 The Great Plague (Black Death) rages in Trebizond. The Turkomans ravage the empire up to the walls of the capital.
1348 Turks capture Kerasunt. Genoese men of war attack Trebizond. The Greeks massacre the Franks for revenge.
1349 Michael makes peace with Genoese, ceding them fortress of Leontokastron. Civil riots break out. Michael dethroned and **Alexius III**, son of Basil, and his mistress, Irene of Trebizond, are brought from Constantinople to occupy the throne. The rebellions of the aristocracy continue.
1355 The rebels headed by the grand duke Nicetas appear with a fleet before Trebizond. Alexius drives them off. He begins to consolidate his power, but the Turkomans gradually seize territory from the empire until there is only a narrow strip of seacoast left.
1380 Alexius quarrels with Megollo Lescari, a Genoese merchant, who fits out galleys to ravage the Black Sea. Alexius submits and confirms trade privileges of the Genoese.
1390 Death of Alexius. His son **Manuel III** succeeds.
1400 Manuel sends troops to the army of Timur, but does not himself take part in the battle of Angora (1402).
1405 After Timur's death Manuel delivers empire from tribute to the Mongols.
1417 Death of Manuel. His son **Alexius IV** succeeds. After the retreat of the Mongols the empire is overrun by the two great Turkoman hordes of the Black and White Sheep. Kara Yusuf, chief of the Black Horde, compels Alexis to send a daughter to marry his son, and exacts tribute.
1420 Death of Kara Yusuf—the emperor ceases to pay tribute to the Black Horde.
1426 Rebellion of Alexius' son Calo-Joannes, who has been raised to imperial dignity. The nobles rescue the emperor. Alexius confers rights of heir apparent and imperial dignity on his second son Alexander, who dies soon afterwards.
1442 First attack of Ottoman Turks on Trebizond is repulsed.
1446 Second rebellion of Calo-Joannes. He murders Alexius and succeeds as **Joannes IV**. He is hated for his crimes.
1449 The sheikh of Ertebil fails in an attempt to capture Trebizond. Joannes forms plan to expel Ottomans from Asia Minor and Muhammed II forced to invade the empire. Joannes compelled to become vassal of Muhammed and pay tribute.
1458 Death of Joannes as he is forming a great league against the Ottomans. A four-year-old son is set aside in favour of his brother **David** who continues Joannes' work on the league.
1461 Siege and capture of Trebizond by Muhammed II. End of the empire of Trebizond. David retires to Mavronaros which he receives in exchange for his empire, and a few years later is put to death at Constantinople for refusing to join the Moslem faith.

## THE KINGDOM OF SALONICA (1204–1222 A.D.)

1204 In the division of the Byzantine Empire among the crusaders, **Boniface**, marquis of Montferrat, commander-in-chief, receives a feudatory kingdom in Asia, but not liking to be so far from his Italian domains, he exchanges it for the province of Macedonia with Thessalonica for his capital. He calls it the kingdom of Salonica. He also believes himself entitled to Crete, and exchanges it with the Venetians for portions of Thessaly. Boniface would like to maintain an independent realm, but Baldwin I of Romania promptly compels him to do homage.
1204–1207 Boniface defeats attempts of the Greeks to recover his kingdom. He marches into the Peloponnesus and lays siege to Corinth and Argos, but is recalled by a rebellion in Thessalonica.
1207 Death of Boniface in a skirmish with the Bulgarians. **Demetrius** his son two years old succeeds with the queen, Margaret, as regent.
The kingdom is protected against the prince of Epirus and the king of Bulgaria by the Romanian emperor, until after the death of Pierre de Courtenai.
1222 While Demetrius is still completing his education in Italy, Theodore, prince of Epirus, conquers the kingdom and is crowned emperor of Thessalonica. Demetrius makes

unsuccessful attempts to recover his kingdom. The title is held by the descendants of Demetrius until William marquis of Montferrat cedes it to the Byzantine emperor in 1284.

1266 Baldwin II, then titular emperor of Romania, granted the kingdom of Salonica to the house of Burgundy, where it remained until Eudes IV sold it to Philip of Tarentum, titular emperor of Romania in 1320.

## THE DESPOTAT OF EPIRUS AND EMPIRE OF THESSALONICA (1204–1469 A.D.)

1204 After the conquest of Constantinople, **Michael I**, a natural son of Constantine Angelus and uncle of Isaac II and Alexius III, escapes into Epirus, marries a native lady, and establishes a government in the territory west of the Pindus Mountains. His capital is at Joannina. It is a typical Byzantine state, totally different from the Frankish feudatory governments. Michael and his descendants all take name of Angelus Comnenus Ducas. He is an able military leader, and extends his principality over all Epirus, Acarnania, Ætolia, and a part of Macedonia and Thessaly. He is virtually independent, but acknowledges Theodore Lascaris I as the lawful emperor of the East.

1214 Assassination of Michael by one of his slaves. His brother **Theodore** succeeds, having sworn fidelity to the throne of Nicæa. He at once begins to extend his dominions.

1217 Theodore captures the Latin emperor, Pierre de Courtenai, who is on his way to Constantinople.

1222 Theodore drives the Lombards out of Salonica, and is crowned emperor of Thessalonica.

### *The Empire of Thessalonica*

1224 Theodore takes Hadrianopolis. His empire now extends from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. He plans attack on Constantinople, but becomes involved in war with John Asan of Bulgaria.

1230 John Asan takes Theodore prisoner and puts out his eyes. Theodore's brother **Manuel** assumes imperial title.

1232 John Asan marries Theodore's daughter and releases him. Theodore returns to Thessalonica and forms party strong enough to drive Manuel out. Theodore's blindness prevents him from reigning, so his son **Joannes** takes the title. Manuel escapes to Nicæa and returns with aid from Joannes Vatatzes, but Theodore persuades him and his brother Constantine to aid in defending the empire against Nicæa.

1234 Vatatzes takes Thessalonica. Joannes compelled to give up imperial dignity and assume rank of despot.

### *The Despotat of Epirus*

1244 **Demetrius** succeeds his brother Joannes.

1246 Joannes Vatatzes, owing to disputes, drives Demetrius from office and unites Thessalonica to the Greek Empire. A natural son of Michael I, Michael is, however, in possession of a portion of the despotat and the blind Theodore of another. Joannes Vatatzes makes **Michael II** despot under promise of absolute fidelity, but Theodore,

1251–1255 by his intrigues, involves Michael in war with Vatatzes.

1255 Michael delivers up Theodore and makes peace with Vatatzes. Michael is expelled from his dominions, but recovers the southern portion and rules there.

1267 Death of Michael. **Nicephorus**, his son, receives title and marries daughter of Theodore Lascaris II. He extends his territory in Acarnania and Ætolia.

1290 Nicephorus attacked by Andronicus II and the Genoese, but he repels them with help of the prince of Achaia and the count of Cephalonia.

1293 Death of Nicephorus. His son **Thomas** succeeds.

1318 Murder of David by his nephew, **Thomas II**, the count of Cephalonia, who is murdered by his wife **Anne**, who is guardian of her son, Nicephorus II, twelve years old, when in

1337 Andronicus III invades the country. Anne turns the despotat over to him. Nicephorus killed, 1358, in a battle with the Albanians while attempting to recover the despotat.

### *The Wallachian Princes of Thessaly*

1259 **Joannes Ducas I**, natural son of the despot Michael II, marries daughter of the Wallachian chief in Thessaly. He founds an independent government, fighting with or against Epirus or Constantinople, as suits his interests.

1290 Succeeded by his son, name not known.
1300 **Joannes Ducas (II)** succeeds under guardianship of Guy II, duke of Athens, his cousin.
1308 On death of Joannes, his possessions are divided among the frontier states.

*The Servian Despots of Epirus*

1367 **Thomas Prelubos** recognised by Stephen Dushan as prince of Joannina or Arta.
1385 Assassination of Prelubos on account of his cruelties. His widow marries **Esau Buondelmonte**, who wars with the Albanians until captured in 1399.

*The Tocco Family in Epirus (Despotat of Romania)*

1400 **Charles Tocco**, grandson of Leonardo Tocco, who was invested with Cephalonia by Robert of Tarentum, titular emperor of Romania, invades Epirus about 1390, and finally conquers enough territory to declare himself despot of Romania.
1429 **Charles II** succeeds his uncle.
1431 The Turks capture Joannina and Ætolia.
1433 Charles becomes a citizen of Venice in order to obtain the protection of that republic.
1452 **Leonard** succeeds his father.
1469 The Turks drive Leonard from the throne.

## THE DUCHY OF ATHENS (1205–1456 A.D.)

*The House of de la Roche*

Between the kingdom of Salonica and the Peloponnesus lie several feudal states apportioned among the crusaders. Of these the duchy of Athens is the most important.

1205 **Otto de la Roche**, a Burgundian noble, takes possession of Athens. He is master of all Attica and Bœotia, but does homage to Boniface of Salonica.
1207 On death of Boniface Thebes is taken from Otto and added to Salonica, but is returned later by Henry of Romania.
1225 Otto prefers to return to his fief in France and resigns in favour of his nephew, **Guy I.**
1264 **John** succeeds his father. He assists Joannes Ducas against the Byzantine army and forms a close alliance with him later on. John captured in the battle of Oreus by the forces of Michael VIII and is released without payment of ransom.
1275 John succeeded by his brother, **William I.**
1280 William assumes the government of Achaia during minority of Isabella Villehardouin.
1290 Death of William. His son, **Guy II**, succeeds.
1293 Guy is invited to administer the dominions of the despot of Wallachia, his ward. Anna, widow of Nicephorus of Epirus, prepares to attack him, but withdraws through fear.
1304 Guy on his marriage to Maud of Hainault receives a fief in the Morea, but claims the whole principality of Achaia.
1308 Death of Guy before he can force his claim. His cousin, **Walter de Brienne**, succeeds.

*The House of Brienne*

The despots of Epirus and Wallachia threaten invasion. Walter makes alliance with Catalan Grand Company for defence and
1310 Walter defeats his enemies, but the Catalans refuse to quit the land.
1311 The Catalans defeat Walter at the battle of Cephisus. The Frankish power falls in northern Greece; the house of Brienne still holds fiefs in Nauplia and Argos.

*The Catalan Grand Company*

**Roger Deslau** appointed duke of Athens. His dominions are extended north and west.

*The House of Aragon, Duke of Athens and Neopatras*

1326 On death of Roger, Manfred, son of Frederick II of Sicily, is invested with the duchy, which becomes an appanage of the house of Aragon.
1330 **William**, Manfred's brother, succeeds.
1331 The son of Walter de Brienne makes unsuccessful attempt to regain duchy.
1338 **John**, brother of William and Manfred, succeeds.

1348 **Frederick**, marquis of Randazzo, son of John, succeeds. He never visits Athens.
1355 **Frederick III**, king of Sicily, succeeds the marquis of Randazzo.
1377 **Maria**, daughter of Frederick III, succeeds to the duchy.
1386 Conquest of Athens by Nerio Acciajuoli, governor of Corinth, in a war concerning the countess of Salona and her heritage.

*The House of Acciajuoli*

1394 **Nerio I** confirmed in the duchy by King Ladislaus of Naples. Nerio taken prisoner by Navarrese troops and purchases his liberty. Death of Nerio; his natural son, **Antonio**, succeeds. Bajazet recognises his authority. Athens enjoys a tranquil rule of forty years.
1435 **Nerio II**, grand-nephew of Nerio I, succeeds on death of Antonio. The administration comes into hands of his brother, Antonio, while Nerio is in western Europe.
1443 Nerio pays tribute to the despot of Morea.
1450 Nerio joins forces with Muhammed II and becomes Ottoman vassal.
1453 Infant son of Nerio succeeds on his father's death with his mother as regent.
1455 Muhammed orders duchy conferred on **Franco**, nephew of Nerio II.
1456 Muhammed finding the Athenians disgusted with Franco annexes duchy to the Ottoman Empire.

There are other feudal states north of the isthmus of Corinth, ruled by the lords of Budonitza, Salona, and Negropont, but details of their history are lacking. Like Athens they are finally merged in the Ottoman Empire.

## THE PRINCIPALITY OF ACHAIA (1205–1460 A.D.)

1205–1208 **Guillaume de Champlitte**, receiving territory in the Peloponnesus as his share of the Byzantine Empire, is joined by Geoffrey Villehardouin, nephew of the chronicler, and conquering about half the peninsula within three years organises a strong feudal government. Geoffrey is his most important feudal vassal, and receives the fief of Kalamata.
1210 Guillaume returns to France leaving his relative Hugh in charge, but the latter dying, Geoffrey is elected in his place. **Geoffrey** possesses himself of the principality. He strengthens it in every possible way.
1218 **Geoffrey II** succeeds his father.
1219–1222 Serious quarrel of Geoffrey with the pope. The ban of excommunication is finally removed.
1246 Death of Geoffrey. His brother **Guillaume Villehardouin** succeeds. He proposes to complete conquest of Peloponnesus.
1247 Conquest of Nauplia with help of Venetians of Modon.
1248 Conquest of Monemvasia. Before the end of the year the entire Peloponnesus is under Frankish domination.
1259 Guillaume assists his father-in-law Michael II of Epirus in his war against Michael VIII of Constantinople. Battle of Pelagonia, and capture of Guillaume, by Michael VIII.
1261 Guillaume released by ceding Monemvasia, Misithra, and Maina, three strong cities, to Michael VIII.

Pope Urban IV releases Guillaume from promise not to wage war on Michael. Warfare results in the Morea.

1263 Urban IV mediates between Michael and Guillaume.
1267 The principality becomes a dependency of the kingdom of Naples, having been that of the Romanian emperors.
1277 Death of Guillaume. His daughter **Isabella** succeeds.
1278 Death of Isabella's husband Philip of Anjou. **Guillaume de la Roche**, duke of Athens, governs for ten years.
1291 Isabella marries Florenz of Hainault.
1297 Death of Florenz and end of last prosperous period of the principality. The suzerainty of Achaia has been transferred to Philip of Tarentum.
1301 Isabella marries Philip of Savoy.
1304 Isabella and Philip leave Greece in consequence of disputes with their vassals and with Philip of Tarentum.
1311 Death of Isabella in Italy. Her daughter **Maud of Hainault**, widow of Guy II of Athens, succeeds.
1313 Maud marries Louis of Burgundy.

1315 Maud and Louis leave for Greece. Ferdinand of Majorca claims principality and sets out to take it.
1316 Death of Ferdinand in battle with Louis.
1317 Death of Louis. The house of Anjou try to marry Maud to Count John of Gravina, but finds she has already married Hugh de la Pallisse. King of Naples declares this marriage null, and Maud is compelled to go through ceremony with John. She is then imprisoned and dies about 1324. **Philip of Tarentum** takes title of prince.
1332 **Robert**, titular emperor of Romania, succeeds his father Philip as prince, while his mother Catherine of Valois becomes suzerain. John of Gravina still disputes the principality. The Achæan barons fail in attempt to transfer their fealty to Constantinople and to Don Jayme II of Majorca.
1346 At death of Catherine de Valois, Robert becomes suzerain of Achaia as well as prince.
1364 Death of Robert, leaving principality to his widow **Mary** of Bourbon, the suzerainty devolving on Philip III titular emperor of Romania. Mary establishes herself in Greece, but is unable to hold the position.
1373 James de Baux becomes suzerain.
1387 Mary retires to Italy. She is last sovereign to rule over the whole of the principality. Achaia falls into a state of anarchy. The country is ravaged by the Seljuk and Ottoman Turks; the strategi and despots of the Palæologus family established by the emperor of Constantinople in the Morean territory that was the price of William Villehardouin's ransom, gradually reconquer the Peloponnesus from the French feudal lords. About 1425, Murad II sets about ruining the Byzantine possessions in the Peloponnesus. After this the Ottoman power in the land steadily increases. In 1458 Muhammed II visits the Peloponnesus, and it is finally conquered by him in 1460, except some cities still in the hands of the Venetians. For world-historic interest, perhaps the most important feature of the feudal states in Greece is thus stated by Finlay: "The Franks ruled the greater part of the Peloponnesus for two centuries, and the feudal system which they introduced was maintained in full vigour for sufficient time to admit of its effects on civilised communities living under the simpler system of personal rights, traced out in the Roman law, being fully developed. The result was that the Franks were demoralised, the Greeks impoverished, and Greece ruined."

## THE VENETIAN ACQUISITIONS (1207-1566 A.D.)

In the partition of the Byzantine Empire, the republic of Venice receives about three-eighths of the whole empire of Romania; but her resources not being adequate to conquer this amount of territory, she makes no effort to take a considerable portion of her share. We have seen how a portion of Thessaly was exchanged with Boniface of Montferrat, and a considerable amount of land falls into the hands of the other adventurers. Venice pursues the policy, allowing her barons personally to conquer certain territories, on condition that they be held as fiefs of the republic. Thus the Dandolo and Viaro families take Gallipoli and the island of Andros; the Ghisi seize Tinos, Scyros, Mycone, and other islands. Ceos falls to the Justiniani and Michicle, Lemnos to the Navigajosa, Astypalia to the Quirini. The twelve islands of the Archipelago forming the Byzantine theme of the Ægean Sea are taken by Mark Sanduno. He invades Naxos about 1207. The Sanduno and Della Carceri rule the islands, vassals of Romania and Venice — uneventful rules in which a fierce Seljuk invasion of Naxos in 1330 is perhaps the most important event — until 1381 when through conspiracy the Crispo family seizes the duchy. In the treaty between Muhammed II and Venice after the capture of Constantinople, the dukes of the Archipelago act as subjects of Venice. When the republic and the Ottoman Empire engage in hostilities, the duke of the Archipelago is compelled to become a vassal of the Sublime Porte, 1537. In 1566, on complaint of the Greek residents, the sultan Selim II seizes the duchy and adds it to his empire, and the last fief of the Romanian Empire is extinguished.

# CHAPTER I

## THE REIGN OF ARCADIUS

[395–408 A.D.]

THE Emperor Theodosius I died in Mediolanum on the 17th of January, 395, after a long illness. A few months before this he had defeated at Frigidus, in the pass of the Julian Alps, Eugenius, the second pretender to lay claim to the throne during his reign. The pious monarch met his death in a different manner from his young co-rulers, Gratian and Valentinian II, but as had many of his predecessors. No murderous steel of mercenary aspirants put an end to his life, but surrounded by faithful friends and followers, and attended by the venerable Bishop Ambrose, his great soul departed from a body long worn out with trouble and anxiety and the many struggles of an almost incessant war. He was not old when he died, for having been born in 346 he had not yet reached the age of fifty, and so, according to the prospect of longevity, it had been thought that he would have a much longer reign.

There had never been a more prosperous time for the Roman world than just then; for, after the defeat of Eugenius, the whole of the Roman Empire had once more passed under the undivided control of one man. Theodosius with his two-sided policy — openly to welcome the Germans pressing into his country, if they agreed to keep peace and friendship, or strongly to oppose their hostile advances — would have been well able to withstand the overcrowding of the west by the tribes persecuted by the Huns for many years longer; but the death of so powerful an enemy, who was greatly feared even by the barbarians, was the signal for an internal rising as well as for an external revolt.

In the midst of all this trouble and distress the ruler now died, leaving the kingdom to his two sons Arcadius and Honorius, the former but a youth, the latter a child of eleven years. With regard to the dividing of the empire, that was all settled, at least as far as Arcadius was concerned, for it was certainly not on his death-bed that the careful Theodosius had first considered the matter. The eastern half, formerly ruled by the father, was left to Arcadius as the elder son; whilst before the murder of Valentinian II a part of the Occident was probably intended to be divided between him (Valentinian) and Honorius.

### A COMPARISON OF THE TWO EMPIRES

The Western Empire consisted of Britain as far as the frontier wall of Hadrian, of Gaul, of Germany up to the *limes transrhenanus*, of Spain, of Italy, of the western part of the province of Illyricum which embraced Noricum,

Pannonia, and Dalmatia, and of which the boundary stretched southeastwards from the mouth of the Scodra (Scutari) over the Bosnian Mountains, along the Drinus (Drina) to the Savus (Save), and of the entire north coast of Africa from the Atlantic Ocean to the Barca plain. The eastern half bequeathed to Arcadius included the Balkan peninsula, bound on the north by the Danube, Asia Minor, the Tauric peninsula (Crimea), Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Lower Libya, and the Pentapolis.

A mere glance on the map shows that the area of the western half by far exceeded that of the east. Indeed, Honorius' realm spread over about one and one half times the area of that of his brother Arcadius. The productiveness and fertility of the individual quarters of the Occident also exceeded that of the Orient; Britain, the farthest link of the Western Roman Empire, brought, according to Strabo's report, tin from the Cornwall peninsula, corn and splendid cattle from the flat southeast; from the hills of the west and north, gold, silver, and ore. The Gauls were renowned pig and sheep breeders, Italy supplied cloth and pickled meats, whilst the flat north and east produced such quantities of grain that at the end of the fourth century the inhabitants of Rome could well have dispensed with the corn sent from Africa and had their wheat brought from Gaul. Spain, although not successful in the cultivation of grain, was amply compensated by the splendid wines which it produced; the rivers yielded gold dust, the mountains silver, copper, and iron, and the sea a wealth of fish.

Africa, owing to the fertility which for centuries filled the granaries of Rome, was so thickly populated that in the fourth century there were 123 bishops' sees in Numidia, and 170 in the consular province of Africa, compared with which Tripolis on the borders of the Sahara was far behind. Italy was and is still to a far greater extent a land of agriculture than Greece.

The Eastern Empire on the other hand shows at first glance a remarkable lack of flat land and a great number of mountains. The Balkan peninsula, for instance, is almost entirely composed of chains of mountains which cross and recross in such a manner as to render exploration very difficult; even up to the present day little is known of the country. Owing to the mountainous character of the Balkan peninsula only a portion of the ground (of which to-day 30 per cent. is unproductive in Turkey, but in Greece quite 58.9 per cent.) could be cultivated. The expansive north was so favourable to the cultivation of corn, especially in the valleys near the rivers, that Thrace once enjoyed the distinction of producing the finest and heaviest wheat for exportation to Greece; whilst in Greece itself only Thessaly and Bœotia were noted for their agricultural soil, the remaining districts being best suited to pasture land for cattle.

Furthermore, in Asia Minor and on the east coast of the Mediterranean but a part of the land repays the trouble of cultivation, for it is only the western valleys of the rivers emptying themselves into the Ægean Sea and the northern border of the Black Sea which yield good harvests of wine, oil, and corn; for the Mediterranean coast, with the exception of the rich district of Adana, offers no specially productive ground.

The eastern portion of the Roman Empire, though certainly far behind the west not only in size but also in its products, enjoyed in other ways many advantages denied to the Occident. On account of the vastness of the Western Empire the various cities and places of importance were widely scattered and separated from the chief centre by great distances, which arrangement was undoubtedly advantageous to discontented legions and

[395 A.D.]

ambitious officers desirous of revolting against the lawful head of the state. The wide expanse to the northwest, however, occasioned a fatal lengthening of the eastern border line guarded by the easily crossed Rhine and Danube.

The Orient, on the contrary, had its sole coast-line bound by the Mediterranean, a much navigated and frequented sea. No city or town was separated from the others by long stretches of land, for the sea enabled the troops from one garrison to reach another in a few days. The Danube was a weak defence against the barbarians marching from the north, and the natural highway of Baku would not lead invaders into the valley of a river opening into Asia Minor, but straight into Armenia, which being full of chasms and ravines, was easy to defend. Even in the case of an invasion from the north the whole of the East, excepting Egypt, would offer but wild uninhabited country to the enemy.

It was not only the sameness of climate and the consequent similarity of products which bound the various divisions of the East closer together than were those of the West, but it was rather the one spiritual teaching and the equable advancement of education which placed the Orient before the Occident. This latter dominion had two great works of civilisation before it—to instil religious knowledge into the minds of the inhabitants of the northwestern provinces, and to introduce Catholic Christianity, as yet unknown to them. The East on the other hand consisted entirely of pure Greeks or of those who had long learned not only to speak but to think in Greek from their ancestors who, seven centuries before, had accompanied Alexander in his glorious triumphal march to the Hydaspes. The whole populace had long since been turned from the Arian belief, so that any differences in the interpretation of a dogma were now taken up and carefully thought over by all, rich and poor, from north to south alike.

In the Occident, however, there was a strong pagan party at court which had only been outwardly overthrown by the downfall of Eugenius, and needed but a favourable opportunity to reproclaim polytheism, even though it were at the cost of their patriotism.

Ambrose states that Theodosius, when on his death-bed, was far more concerned about the sanctity of the church than the welfare of the state, for he little thought that the two portions of his empire would be separated and become as two worlds with totally different histories. He died in the firm belief that his sons and descendants would never lose sight of the value and importance of unity, and that each would make his own the perils of the other.

By reason of this the two dominions remained united, at least to all outward appearances, for many centuries. All laws and regulations of both were without exception headed by the names of the two rulers, and they were all drawn up in Latin up to the time of Justinian; the year was then as now named after the two consuls, one of whom was appointed by each division.

In Europe north of the Danube the country was being constantly invaded, and consequently the neighbouring provinces, such as Scythia, Mœsia Secunda, Dacia Ripensis, and Mœsia Prima, had numerous troops which were under the command of *duces*. Thirty-one regiments of cavalry, thirty-nine auxiliaries, a portion of which consisted of well-trained scouts (*exploratores*), thirty-two legiones riparenses, three of them being exploratores, and three detachments of sailors (*nauclerii*) were quartered in the numerous fortresses situated either right on the banks of the Danube or as close as possible, especially in Noviodunum, Durostorum, Viminacium, Cebrum, and

Margus. The whole of the active military forces consisted, as far as infantry is concerned, of seventy legions, which, all told, would present an army of 420,000 men and thus exceed the Turkish peace army of 151,129 (in war 758,000 men) which occupied that territory in 1885.

As the frontiers of the country were so well protected it may be supposed, though there is but scanty information on the subject, that there was also a strong navy. The fleet served to protect military transports and the grain ships, and helped in the transmission of troops and baggage.

The Eastern as well as the Western Empire had a fleet on the Rhine and on the Danube controlled by those governing the army in that quarter, but the positions of the stations cannot be given with certainty.

Arms for the entire forces by land and by sea were manufactured in enormous state factories, the post of a workman being an hereditary one, like that of a decurio. Everything was under the direct supervision of the magister officiorum. In the Orient Damascus forged shields and other weapons, and Antioch shields and mail for horse and man. In Odessa shields and necessaries for fitting out the ships were manufactured, and in Irenopolis (Cilicia) spears and lances. The diocese of Pontus in Cæsarea (Cappadocia) supplied mail and shields; in Asia there was only one manufactory for weapons and that was in Sardis, whilst in Thrace for the same purpose there were many buildings.

## GREATNESS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

The capital of the Eastern dominions, now separated forever from the Western, was Constantinople, the city which had hitherto stood second to Rome. It would be impossible even to compare its history and existence with that of Rome, yet, owing to its excellent position, it was superior. It would have been the greatest possible mistake for Constantine the Great to have chosen either Sardica, Thessalonica, the territory of Ilium or Chalcedon, between which places he hesitated some time, to be the new Rome of the East, for however richly nature may have endowed them all, to elect any one would have seemed but the satisfying of a princely caprice; as Constantinople on the straits of the Bosporus was then and always will be the one natural city commanding the whole of the Balkan peninsula, Asia Minor, and the numerous seas and rivers uniting at this spot.

Where is such another city on the main sea to be found on which nature's favours have been so profusely showered? It is from here that the way leads by Thessalonica and Dyrrhachium to the Occident; by Philippopolis, Hadrianopolis, Sardica, and along the Morava into the heart of Europe; on the other side one goes across country over the plains of Asia Minor to the great metropolis of Antioch, to Babylon, and yet further on straight to the spices, pearls, and precious stones of rich India. By sea the way is open to the rich corn districts on the coast of Pontus, eastward to Trebizond, the Phasis, and still further in this direction is Tiflis with the Caspian Sea and central Asia; southward to the flourishing Grecian colonies on the west coast of Asia Minor and past Rhodes to the valuable land of Egypt; and lastly southwards to the island world in the Ægean Sea, Athens, and away to the west of the Mediterranean. Constantinople was specially suited to the carrying on of such a gigantic shipping trade, since, in the deeply indented "Golden Horn," it possessed one of the most beautiful and best sheltered harbours that may be found the world over.

For the maintenance of the inhabitants the sea was richly supplied with fish, and millions of tunny fish passed yearly through the sea of Marmora, which when caught were salted and smoked. Although in the course of years this wealth of fish began to diminish, a number of the people could and do still earn their livelihood by fishing; for besides this special species quantities of sword-fish, anchovies, etc., are caught. The land provided hares, swine, and pheasants, splendid quail and partridges, and the generally mild climate was favourable to the growth of nourishing figs.

Although the environs of Thrace had in earlier days supplied sufficient wheat to supply the wants of the people, the increase of population now demanded more food, and Pontian and Egyptian corn were introduced into the country.

BYZANTINE EMPEROR
(Based on Mongez)

Unfortunately this city, otherwise so perfect, was frequently disturbed by earthquakes, sometimes accompanied by great upheavals of the sea; but in spite of the unsafe foundations of the buildings, especially of the larger and more important ones, the emperors did not hesitate to enrich the city, rebuilt by Constantine the Great in 330, with imposing edifices. As Constantine himself, with a perennial passion for building, had endeavoured to cover the land for about fifteen furlongs around the city with edifices of every possible kind, the succeeding emperors were not to be thought lacking; and so, up to the time when the two empires were separated, the residences of the emperors on the seven hills in the fourteen departments were, according to models of Rome, of no mean pretensions.

In the first division, which took in the east points of the neck of land washed by the Golden Horn and the Bosporus, was the great imperial palace, which included, besides the private residence of the emperor, with the throne room and the apartment made entirely of porphyry in which the princes and princesses were born, the houses of all the chief people in office at court, extensive laundries, and a host of most beautiful halls, courts, and gardens. Other palaces were attached, as the one inhabited by Theodosius' daughter Placidia, and there were also fifteen private baths supplied by the warm springs of Arcadia; and through the chalcæ, with its surrounding piazza and gilded roofed entrance, the way led to the second division, in which stood the "great church" built by Constantine and rebuilt later by Justinian as St. Sophia, and the residences of the senators, all carried out in the best style with the costliest marble. The inartistic Constantine had had the statues of the Rhodian Zeus and the Athene of Lindos taken from their original standing places and put in front of these buildings. Lastly came the Baths of Zeuxippus in the Grove of Zeus, sufficiently immense to enable two thousand men to bathe there daily.[b]

### THE EAST AND THE WEST

The number and importance of the Gothic forces in the Roman armies during the reign of Theodosius had enabled several of their commanders to attain the highest rank; and among these officers, Alaric was the most distinguished by his future greatness.

The death of Theodosius threw the administration of the Eastern Empire into the hands of Rufinus, the minister of Arcadius; and that of the Western, into those of Stilicho, the guardian of Honorius. The discordant elements which composed the Roman Empire began to reveal all their incongruities under these two ministers. Rufinus was a civilian from Gaul; and, from his Roman habits and feelings and western prejudices, disagreeable to the Greeks. Stilicho was of barbarian descent, and consequently equally unacceptable to the aristocracy of Rome; but he was an able and popular soldier, and had served with distinction both in the East and in the West. As Stilicho was the husband of Serena, the niece and adopted daughter of Theodosius the Great, his alliance with the imperial family gave him an unusual influence in the administration. The two ministers hated one another with all the violence of aspiring ambition; and, unrestrained by any feeling of patriotism, each was more intent on ruining his rival than on serving the state. The greater number of the officers in the Roman service, both civil and military, were equally inclined to sacrifice every public duty for the gratification of their avarice or ambition.

### ALARIC'S REVOLT

At this time Alaric, partly from disgust at not receiving all the preferment which he expected, and partly in the hope of compelling the government of the Eastern Empire to agree to his terms, quitted the imperial service and retired towards the frontiers, where he assembled a force sufficiently large to enable him to act independently of all authority. Availing himself of the disputes between the ministers of the two emperors, and perhaps instigated by Rufinus or Stilicho to aid their intrigues, he established himself in the provinces to the south of the Danube. In the year 395 he advanced to the walls of Constantinople; but the movement was evidently a feint, as he must have known his inability to attack a large and populous city defended by a powerful garrison, and which even in ordinary times received the greater part of its supplies by sea. After this demonstration, Alaric marched into Thrace and Macedonia, and extended his ravages into Thessaly. Rufinus has been accused of assisting Alaric's invasion, and his negotiations with him while in the vicinity of Constantinople authorise the suspicion. When the Goth found the northern provinces exhausted, he resolved to invade Greece and Peloponnesus, which had long enjoyed profound tranquillity. The cowardly behaviour of Antiochus the proconsul of Achaia, and of Gerontius the commander of the Roman troops, both friends of Rufinus, was considered a confirmation of his treachery. Thermopylæ was left unguarded, and Alaric entered Greece without encountering any resistance.

The ravages committed by Alaric's army have been described in fearful terms; villages and towns were burned, the men were murdered, and the women and children carried away to be sold as slaves by the Goths. But even this invasion affords proofs that Greece had recovered from the desolate condition in which it had been seen by Pausanias. The walls of Thebes

[395 A.D.]

had been rebuilt, and it was in such a state of defence that Alaric could not venture to besiege it, but hurried forward to Athens. He concluded a treaty with the civil and military authorities, which enabled him to enter that city without opposition; his success was probably assisted by treacherous arrangements with Rufinus, and by the treaty with the municipal authorities, which secured the town from being plundered by the Gothic soldiers; for he appears to have really occupied Athens rather as a federate leader than as a foreign conqueror.

The tale recorded by Zosimus[e] of the Christian Alaric having been induced by the apparition of the goddess Minerva to spare Athens, is refuted by the direct testimony of other writers, who mention the capitulation of the city. The fact that the depredations of Alaric hardly exceeded the ordinary license of a rebellious general, is, at the same time, perfectly established. The public buildings and monuments of ancient splendour suffered no wanton destruction from his visit; but there can be no doubt that Alaric and his troops levied heavy contributions on the city and its inhabitants. Athens evidently owed its good treatment to the condition of its population, and perhaps to the strength of its walls, which imposed some respect on the Goths; for the rest of Attica did not escape the usual fate of the districts through which the barbarians marched. The town of Eleusis, and the great temple of Ceres, were plundered and then destroyed. Whether this work of devastation was caused by the Christian monks who attended the Gothic host, and excited their bigoted Arian votaries to avenge the cause of religion on the temples of the pagans at Eleusis, because they had been compelled to spare the shrines at Athens, or whether it was the accidental effect of the eager desire of plunder or of the wanton love of destruction among a disorderly body of troops, is not very material. Bigoted monks, avaricious officers, and disorderly soldiers were numerous in Alaric's band.

Gerontius, who had abandoned the pass of Thermopylæ, took no measures to defend the Isthmus of Corinth, or the difficult passes of Mount Geranion, so that Alaric marched unopposed into the Peloponnesus, and, in a short time, captured every city in it without meeting with any resistance. Corinth, Argos, and Sparta, were all plundered by the Goths. The security in which Greece had long remained, and the policy of the government, which discouraged their independent institutions, had conspired to leave the province without protection, and the people without arms. The facility which Alaric met with in effecting his conquest, and his views, which were directed to obtain an establishment in the empire as an imperial officer or feudatory governor, rendered the conduct of his army not that of avowed enemies. Yet it often happened that they laid waste everything in the line of their march, burned villages, and massacred the inhabitants.

Alaric passed the winter in the Peloponnesus without encountering any opposition from the people; yet many of the Greek cities still kept a body of municipal police, which might surely have taken the field, had the imperial officers performed their duty and endeavoured to organise a regular resistance in the country districts. The moderation of the Goth, and the treason of the Roman governor, seem both attested by this circumstance. The government of the Eastern Empire had fallen into such disorder at the commencement of the reign of Arcadius, that even after Rufinus had been assassinated by the army the new ministers of the empire gave themselves very little concern about the fate of Greece.

Honorius had a more able, active, and ambitious minister in Stilicho, and he determined to punish the Goths for their audacity in daring to establish

themselves in the empire without the imperial authority. Stilicho had attempted to save Thessaly in the preceding year, but had been compelled to return to Italy, after he had reached Thessalonica, by an express order of the emperor Arcadius, or rather of his minister Rufinus. In the spring of the year 396, he assembled a fleet at Ravenna, and transported his army directly to Corinth, which the Goths do not appear to have garrisoned, and where, probably, the Roman governor still resided. Stilicho's army, aided by the inhabitants, soon cleared the open country of the Gothic bands, and Alaric drew together the remains of his diminished army in the elevated plain of Mount Pholoe, which has since served as a point of retreat for the northern invaders of Greece. Stilicho contented himself with occupying the passes with his army; but his carelessness, or the relaxed discipline of his troops, soon afforded the watchful Alaric an opportunity of escaping with his army, of carrying off all the plunder which they had collected, and, by forced marches, of gaining the Isthmus of Corinth.

BYZANTINE PEASANT

Alaric succeeded in conducting his army into Epirus, where he disposed his forces to govern and plunder that province, as he had expected to rule Peloponnesus. Stilicho was supposed to have winked at his proceedings, in order to render his own services indispensable by leaving a dangerous enemy in the heart of the Eastern Empire; but the truth appears to be that Alaric availed himself so ably of the jealousy with which the court of Constantinople viewed the proceedings of Stilicho, as to negotiate a treaty, by which he was received into the Roman service, and that he really entered Epirus as a general of Arcadius. Stilicho was again ordered to retire from the Eastern Empire, and he obeyed rather than commence a civil war by pursuing Alaric. The conduct of the Gothic troops in Epirus was, perhaps, quite as orderly as that of the Roman legionaries; so that Alaric was probably welcomed as a protector when he obtained the appointment of commander-in-chief of the imperial forces in eastern Illyricum, which he held for four years. During this time he prepared his troops to seek his fortune in the Western Empire. The military commanders, whether Roman or barbarian, were equally indifferent to the fate of the people whom they were employed to defend; and the Greeks appear to have suffered equal oppression from the armies of Stilicho and Alaric.

The condition of the European Greeks underwent a great change for the worse, in consequence of this unfortunate plundering expedition of the Goths. The destruction of their property and the loss of their slaves were so great, that the evil could only have been slowly repaired under the best government and perfect security of their possessions. In the miserable condition to which the Eastern Empire was reduced, this was hopeless; and a long period elapsed before the mass of the population of Greece again attained the prosperous condition in which Alaric had found it; nor were some of the cities which he destroyed ever rebuilt. The ruin of roads, aqueducts, cisterns, and public

[396 A.D.]

buildings, erected by the accumulation of capital in prosperous and enterprising ages, was a loss which could never be repaired by a diminished and impoverished population.

History generally preserves but few traces of the devastations which affect only the people; but the sudden misery inflicted on Greece was so great, when contrasted with her previous tranquillity, that testimonies of her sufferings are to be found in the laws of the empire. Her condition excited the compassion of the government during the reign of Theodosius II. There exists a law which exempts the cities of Illyricum from the charge of contributing towards the expenses of the public spectacles at Constantinople, in consequence of the sufferings which the ravages of the Goths and the oppressive administration of Alaric had inflicted on the inhabitants. There is another law which proves that many estates were without owners, in consequence of the depopulation caused by the Gothic invasions; and a third law relieves Greece from two-thirds of the ordinary contributions to government, in consequence of the poverty to which the inhabitants were reduced.

This unfortunate period is as remarkable for the devastations committed by the Huns in Asia as for those of the Goths in Europe, and marks the commencement of the rapid decrease of the Greek race and of the decline of Greek civilisation throughout the empire. While Alaric was laying waste the provinces of European Greece, an army of Huns from the banks of the Tanais penetrated through Armenia into Cappadocia, and extended their ravages over Syria, Cilicia, and Mesopotamia. Antioch, at last, resisted their assaults and arrested their progress; but they took many Greek cities of importance, and inflicted an incalculable injury on the population of the provinces which they entered. In a few months they retreated to their seats on the Palus Mæotis, having contributed much to accelerate the ruin of the richest and most populous portion of the civilised world.[c]

## EUTROPIUS THE EUNUCH

The first events of the reign of Arcadius and Honorius are so intimately connected that the rebellion of the Goths and the fall of Rufinus have already claimed a place in the history of the West.

Eutropius, one of the principal eunuchs of the palace of Constantinople, succeeded the haughty minister whose ruin he had accomplished, and whose vices he soon imitated. Every order of the state bowed to the new favourite; and their tame and obsequious submission encouraged him to insult the laws and, what is still more difficult and dangerous, the manners of his country. Under the weakest of the predecessors of Arcadius, the reign of the eunuchs had been secret and almost invisible. They insinuated themselves into the confidence of the prince; but their ostensible functions were confined to the menial service of the wardrobe and imperial bedchamber.

Now in the senate, the capital, and the provinces, the statues of Eutropius were erected in brass or marble, decorated with the symbols of his civil and military virtues, and inscribed with the pompous title of the third founder of Constantinople. He was promoted to the rank of patrician, which began to signify, in a popular and even legal acceptation, the father of the emperor; and the last year of the fourth century was polluted by the consulship of a eunuch and a slave.

The bold and vigorous mind of Rufinus seems to have been actuated by a more sanguinary and revengeful spirit; but the avarice of the eunuch was

not less insatiate than that of the prefect. As long as he despoiled the oppressors, who had enriched themselves with the plunder of the people, Eutropius might gratify his covetous disposition without much envy or injustice; but the progress of his rapine soon invaded the wealth which had been acquired by lawful inheritance or laudable industry.

Among the generals and consuls of the East, Abundantius had reason to dread the first effects of the resentment of Eutropius. He had been guilty of the unpardonable crime of introducing that abject slave to the palace of Constantinople; and some degree of praise must be allowed to a powerful and ungrateful favourite who was satisfied with the disgrace of his benefactor. Abundantius was stripped of his ample fortunes by an imperial rescript, and banished to Pityus, on the Euxine, the last frontier of the Roman world, where he subsisted by the precarious mercy of the barbarians, till he could obtain, after the fall of Eutropius, a milder exile at Sidon in Phœnicia.

The destruction of Timasius required a more serious and regular mode of attack. That great officer, the master-general of the armies of Theodosius, had signalised his valour by a decisive victory which he obtained over the Goths of Thessaly; but he was too prone, after the example of his sovereign, to enjoy the luxury of peace and to abandon his confidence to wicked and designing flatterers. Timasius had despised the public clamour, by promoting an infamous dependent to the command of a cohort; and he deserved to feel the ingratitude of Bargus, who was secretly instigated by the favourite to accuse his patron of a treasonable conspiracy.

The general was arraigned before the tribunal of Arcadius himself; and the principal eunuch stood by the side of the throne to suggest the questions and answers of his sovereign. But as this form of trial might be deemed partial and arbitrary, the further inquiry into the crimes of Timasius was delegated to Saturninus and Procopius; the former of consular rank, the latter still respected as the father-in-law of the emperor Valens. The appearances of a fair and legal proceeding were maintained by the blunt honesty of Procopius; and he yielded with reluctance to the obsequious dexterity of his colleague, who pronounced a sentence of condemnation against the unfortunate Timasius. His immense riches were confiscated, in the name of the emperor and for the benefit of the favourite; and he was doomed to perpetual exile at Oasis, a solitary spot in the midst of the sandy deserts of Libya (399).

The public hatred and the despair of individuals, continually threatened, or seemed to threaten, the personal safety of Eutropius, as well as of the numerous adherents who were attached to his fortune and had been promoted by his venal favour. For their mutual defence, he contrived the safeguard of a law, which violated every principle of humanity and justice.

(1) It is enacted, in the name and by the authority of Arcadius, that all those who shall conspire, either with subjects or with strangers, against the lives of any of the persons whom the emperor considers as the members of his own body, shall be punished with death and confiscation.

(2) This extreme severity might, perhaps, be justified, had it been only directed to secure the representatives of the sovereign from any actual violence in the execution of their office. But the whole body of imperial dependents claimed a privilege, or rather impunity, which screened them, in the loosest moments of their lives, from the hasty, perhaps the justifiable, resentment of their fellow-citizens; and, by a strange perversion of the laws, the same degree of guilt and punishment was applied to a private quarrel and to a deliberate conspiracy against the emperor and the empire. The edict of

[399 A.D.]

Arcadius most positively and most absurdly declares that, in such cases of treason, thoughts and actions ought to be punished with equal severity; that the knowledge of a mischievous intention, unless it be instantly revealed, becomes equally criminal with the intention itself; and that those rash men who shall presume to solicit the pardon of traitors, shall themselves be branded with public and perpetual infamy.

(3) "With regard to the sons of the traitors," continues the emperor, "although they ought to share the punishment, since they will probably imitate the guilt of their parents, yet, by the special effect of our imperial lenity, we grant them their lives; but, at the same time, we declare them incapable of inheriting, either on the father's or on the mother's side, or of receiving any gift or legacy from the testament either of kinsmen or of strangers. Stigmatised with hereditary infamy, excluded from the hopes of honours or fortune, let them endure the pangs of poverty and contempt, till they shall consider life as a calamity, and death as a comfort and relief." In such words, so well adapted to insult the feelings of mankind, did the emperor, or rather his favourite eunuch, applaud the moderation of a law which transferred the same unjust and inhuman penalties to the children of all those who had seconded or who had not disclosed these fictitious conspiracies. Some of the noblest regulations of Roman jurisprudence have been suffered to expire; but this edict, a convenient and forcible engine of ministerial tyranny, was carefully inserted in the codes of Theodosius and Justinian; and the same maxims have been revived in modern ages to protect the electors of Germany and the cardinals of the church of Rome.

## TRIBIGILD THE OSTROGOTH; THE FALL OF EUTROPIUS

Yet the sanguinary laws which spread terror among a disarmed and dispirited people were of too weak a texture to restrain the bold enterprise of Tribigild the Ostrogoth. The colony of that warlike nation, which had been planted by Theodosius in one of the most fertile districts of Phrygia, impatiently compared the slow returns of laborious husbandry with the successful rapine and liberal rewards of Alaric; and their leader resented, as a personal affront, his own ungracious reception in the palace of Constantinople.

A soft and wealthy province, in the heart of the empire, was astonished by the sound of war; and the faithful vassal who had been disregarded or oppressed was again respected as soon as he resumed the hostile character of a barbarian. The vineyards and fruitful fields, between the rapid Marsyas and the winding Mæander, were consumed with fire; the decayed walls of the city crumbled into dust at the first stroke of an enemy; the trembling inhabitants escaped from a bloody massacre to the shores of the Hellespont; and a considerable part of Asia Minor was desolated by the rebellion of Tribigild. His rapid progress was checked by the resistance of the peasants of Pamphylia; and the Ostrogoths, attacked in a narrow pass, between the city of Selgæ, a deep morass, and the craggy cliffs of Mount Taurus, were defeated with the loss of their bravest troops. But the spirit of their chief was not daunted by misfortune; and his army was continually recruited by swarms of barbarians and outlaws, who were desirous of exercising the profession of robbery under the more honourable names of war and conquest. The rumours of the success of Tribigild might for some time be suppressed by fear or disguised by flattery; yet they gradually alarmed both the court and the capital.

The approach of danger and the obstinacy of Tribigild, who refused all terms of accommodation, compelled Eutropius to summon a council of war. After claiming for himself the privilege of a veteran soldier, the eunuch intrusted the guard of Thrace and the Hellespont to Gainas the Goth, and the command of the Asiatic army to his favourite Leo; two generals who differently, but effectually, promoted the cause of the rebels. Leo, who from the bulk of his body and the dulness of his mind was surnamed the Ajax of the East, had deserted his original trade of a woolcomber to exercise, with much less skill and success, the military profession; and his uncertain operations were capriciously framed and executed, with an ignorance of real difficulties and a timorous neglect of every favourable opportunity. The rashness of the Ostrogoths had drawn them into a disadvantageous position between the rivers Melas and Eurymedon, where they were almost besieged by the peasants of Pamphylia; but the arrival of an imperial army, instead of completing their destruction, afforded the means of safety and victory. Tribigild surprised the unguarded camp of the Romans in the darkness of the night; seduced the faith of the greater part of the barbarian auxiliaries, and dissipated, without much effort, the troops which had been corrupted by the relaxation of discipline and the luxury of the capital.

The bold satirist, who has indulged his discontent by the partial and passionate censure of the Christian emperors, violates the dignity rather than the truth of history by comparing the son of Theodosius to one of those harmless and simple animals who scarcely feel that they are the property of their shepherd. Two passions, however, fear and conjugal affection, awakened the languid soul of Arcadius; he was terrified by the threats of a victorious barbarian; and he yielded to the tender eloquence of his wife, Eudoxia, who, with a flood of artificial tears, presenting her infant children to their father, implored his justice for some real or imaginary insult which she imputed to the audacious eunuch. The emperor's hand was directed to sign the condemnation of Eutropius; the magic spell, which during four years had bound the prince and the people, was instantly dissolved; and the acclamations that so lately hailed the merit and fortune of the favourite, were converted into the clamours of the soldiers and people, who reproached his crimes and pressed his immediate execution.

In this hour of distress and despair his only refuge was in the sanctuary of the church, whose privileges he had wisely or profanely attempted to circumscribe; and the most eloquent of the saints, John Chrysostom, enjoyed the triumph of protecting a prostrate minister, whose choice had raised him to the ecclesiastical throne of Constantinople. The archbishop, ascending the pulpit of the cathedral, that he might be distinctly seen and heard by an innumerable crowd of either sex and of every age, pronounced a seasonable and pathetic discourse on the forgiveness of injuries and the instability of human greatness. The agonies of the pale and affrighted wretch who lay grovelling under the table of the altar, exhibited a solemn and instructive spectacle; and the orator, who was afterwards accused of insulting the misfortunes of Eutropius, laboured to excite the contempt that he might assuage the fury of the people. The powers of humanity, of superstition, and of eloquence prevailed. The empress Eudoxia was restrained, by her own prejudices or by those of her subjects, from violating the sanctuary of the church; and Eutropius was tempted to capitulate, by the milder arts of persuasion and by an oath that his life should be spared.

Careless of the dignity of their sovereign, the new ministers of the palace immediately published an edict to declare that his late favourite had dis-

[399-400 A.D.]

graced the names of consul and patrician, to abolish his statues, to confiscate his wealth, and to inflict a perpetual exile in the island of Cyprus. A despicable and decrepit eunuch could no longer alarm the fears of his enemies; nor was he capable of enjoying what yet remained — the comforts of peace, of solitude, and of a happy climate. But their implacable revenge still envied him the last moments of a miserable life, and Eutropius had no sooner touched the shores of Cyprus than he was hastily recalled. The vain hope of eluding by a change of place the obligation of an oath, engaged the empress to transfer the scene of his trial and execution from Constantinople to the adjacent suburb of Chalcedon. The consul Aurelian pronounced the sentence; and the motives of that sentence expose the jurisprudence of a despotic government. The crimes which Eutropius had committed against the people might have justified his death, but he was found guilty of harnessing to his chariot the sacred animals which, from their breed or colour, were reserved for the use of the emperor alone.

BYZANTINE PRIEST

While this domestic revolution was transacted, Gainas openly revolted from his allegiance; united his forces, at Thyatira in Lydia, with those of Tribigild; and still maintained his superior ascendant over the rebellious leader of the Ostrogoths. The confederate armies advanced, without resistance, to the straits of the Hellespont and the Bosporus; and Arcadius was instructed to prevent the loss of his Asiatic dominions by resigning his authority and his person to the faith of the barbarians. The church of the holy martyr Euphemia, situate on a lofty eminence near Chalcedon, was chosen for the place of the interview. Gainas bowed with reverence at the feet of the emperor, whilst he required the sacrifice of Aurelian and Saturninus, two ministers of consular rank; and their naked necks were exposed by the haughty rebel to the edge of the sword, till he condescended to grant them a precarious and disgraceful respite. The Goths, according to the terms of the agreement, were immediately transported from Asia into Europe; and their victorious chief, who accepted the title of master-general of the Roman armies, soon filled Constantinople with his troops and distributed among his dependents the honours and rewards of the empire.

In his early youth, Gainas had passed the Danube as a suppliant and a fugitive; his elevation had been the work of valour and fortune, and his indiscreet or perfidious conduct was the cause of his rapid downfall. Notwithstanding the vigorous opposition of the archbishop, he importunately claimed for his Arian sectaries the possession of a peculiar church; and the pride of the Catholics was offended by the public toleration of heresy. [The Emperor, at Gainas' demand, melted the plate of the church of the Apostles.]

Every quarter of Constantinople was filled with tumult and disorder; and the barbarians gazed with such ardour on the rich shops of the jewellers and the tables of the bankers, which were covered with gold and silver, that it was judged prudent to remove those dangerous temptations from their sight. They resented the injurious precaution; and some alarming attempts were made, during the night, to attack and destroy with fire the imperial palace. In this state of mutual and suspicious hostility, the guards and the people of Constantinople shut the gates and rose in arms to prevent or to punish the conspiracy of the Goths. During the absence of Gainas, his troops were surprised and oppressed; seven thousand barbarians perished in this bloody massacre. In the fury of the pursuit the Catholics uncovered the roof, and continued to throw down flaming logs of wood, till they overwhelmed their adversaries, who had retreated to the church or conventicle of the Arians. Gainas was either innocent of the design or too confident of his success; he was astonished by the intelligence that the flower of his army had been ingloriously destroyed, that he himself was declared a public enemy, and that his countryman, Fravitta, a brave and loyal confederate, had assumed the management of the war by sea and land.

The enterprises of the rebel against the cities of Thrace were encountered by a firm and well-ordered defence; his hungry soldiers were soon reduced to the grass that grew on the margin of the fortifications; and Gainas, who vainly regretted the wealth and luxury of Asia, embraced a desperate resolution of forcing the passage of the Hellespont. He was destitute of vessels; but the woods of the Chersonesus afforded material for rafts, and his intrepid barbarians did not refuse to trust themselves to the waves. But Fravitta attentively watched the progress of their undertaking. As soon as they had gained the middle of the stream, the Roman galleys, impelled by the full force of oars, of the current, and of a favourable wind, rushed forwards in compact order and with irresistible weight; and the Hellespont was covered with the fragments of the Gothic shipwreck.

After the destruction of his hopes and the loss of many thousands of his bravest soldiers, Gainas, who could no longer aspire to govern or to subdue the Romans, determined to resume the independence of a savage life. A light and active body of barbarian horse, disengaged from their infantry and baggage, might perform in eight or ten days a march of three hundred miles from the Hellespont to the Danube. This design was secretly communicated to the national troops, who devoted themselves to the fortunes of their leader; and before the signal of departure was given, a great number of provincial auxiliaries whom he suspected of an attachment to their native country, were perfidiously massacred.

But a formidable ally appeared in arms to vindicate the majesty of the empire, and to guard the peace and liberty of Scythia. The superior forces of Uldin, king of the Huns, opposed the progress of Gainas; a hostile and ruined country prohibited his retreat; he disdained to capitulate, and after repeatedly attempting to cut his way through the ranks of the enemy, he was slain, with his desperate followers, in the field of battle. Eleven days after the naval victory of the Hellespont, the head of Gainas, the inestimable gift of the conqueror, was received at Constantinople with the most liberal expressions of gratitude; and the public deliverance was celebrated by festivals and illuminations. The triumphs of Arcadius became the subject of epic poems; and the monarch, no longer oppressed by any hostile terrors, resigned himself to the mild and absolute dominion of his wife, the fair and artful Eudoxia, who has sullied her fame by the persecution of St. John Chrysostom.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Born of a noble and opulent family in the capital of Syria, Chrysostom had been educated by the care of a tender mother, under the tuition of the most skilful masters. His piety soon disposed him to renounce the lucrative and honourable profession of the law, and to bury himself in the adjacent desert, where he subdued the lusts of the flesh by an austere penance of six years. His infirmities compelled him to return to the society of mankind, but in the midst of his family and afterwards on the archiepiscopal throne Chrysostom still persevered in the practice of the monastic virtues. The ample revenues which his predecessors had consumed in pomp and luxury he diligently applied to the establishment of hospitals; and the multitudes who were supported by his charity preferred the eloquent and edifying discourses of their archbishop to the amusements of the theatre or the circus.

The pastoral labours of the archbishop of Constantinople provoked and gradually united against him two sorts of enemies—the aspiring clergy who envied his success, and the obstinate sinners who were offended by his reproofs. [Chrysostom's sermons from the pulpit of St. Sophia on the degeneracy of the Christians had their severest application in court circles where there was a large share of guilt to be divided among a relatively small number of criminals.] The secret resentment of the court encouraged the discontent of the clergy and monks of Constantinople, who were too hastily reformed by the fervent zeal of their archbishop. He had condemned from the pulpit the domestic females of the clergy of Constantinople, who, under the name of servants or sisters, afforded a perpetual occasion either of sin or of scandal.

The silent and solitary ascetics who had secluded themselves from the world were entitled to the warmest approbation of Chrysostom; but he despised and stigmatised, as the disgrace of their holy profession, the crowd of degenerate monks who, from some unworthy motives of pleasure or profit, so frequently infested the streets of the capital. To the voice of persuasion the archbishop was obliged to add the terrors of authority; and his ardour in the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction was not always exempt from passion; nor was it always guided by prudence. Chrysostom was naturally of a choleric disposition. Although he struggled, according to the precepts of the gospel, to love his private enemies, he indulged himself in the privilege of hating the enemies of God and of the church; and his sentiments were sometimes delivered with too much energy of countenance and expression.

Conscious of the purity of his intentions, and perhaps of the superiority of his genius, the archbishop of Constantinople extended the jurisdiction of the imperial city, that he might enlarge the sphere of his pastoral labours; and the conduct which the profane imputed to an ambitious motive appeared to Chrysostom himself in the light of a sacred and indispensable duty. In his visitation through the Asiatic provinces, he deposed thirteen bishops of Lydia and Phrygia; and indiscreetly declared that a deep corruption of simony and licentiousness had infected the whole episcopal order. If those bishops were innocent, such a rash and unjust condemnation must excite a well-grounded discontent. If they were guilty, the numerous associates of their guilt would soon discover that their own safety depended on the ruin of the archbishop, whom they studied to represent as the tyrant of the Eastern church.

This ecclesiastical conspiracy was managed by Theophilus, archbishop of Alexandria, an active and ambitious prelate, who displayed the fruits of

rapine in monuments of ostentation. His national dislike to the rising greatness of a city which degraded him from the second to the third rank in the Christian world, was exasperated by some personal disputes with Chrysostom himself. By the private invitation of the empress, Theophilus landed at Constantinople with a stout body of Egyptian mariners to encounter the populace, and a train of dependent bishops to secure, by their voices, the majority of a synod.

The synod was convened in the suburb of Chalcedon, surnamed the Oak, where Rufinus had erected a stately church and monastery; and their proceedings were continued during fourteen days or sessions. A bishop and a deacon accused the archbishop of Constantinople; but the frivolous or improbable nature of the forty-seven articles which they presented against him may justly be considered as a fair and unexceptionable panegyric. Four successive summons were signified to Chrysostom; but he still refused to trust either his person or his reputation in the hands of his implacable enemies, who, prudently declining the examination of any particular charges, condemned his contumacious disobedience and hastily pronounced a sentence of deposition. The synod of the Oak immediately addressed the emperor to ratify and execute their judgment, and charitably insinuated that the penalties of treason might be inflicted on the audacious preacher, who had reviled, under the name of Jezebel, the empress Eudoxia herself. The archbishop was rudely arrested, and conducted through the city by one of the imperial messengers, who landed him, after a short navigation, near the entrance of the Euxine; but two days later he was gloriously recalled.

The first astonishment of his faithful people had been mute and passive; they suddenly rose with unanimous and irresistible fury. Theophilus escaped; but the promiscuous crowd of monks and Egyptian mariners was slaughtered without pity in the streets of Constantinople. A seasonable earthquake justified the interposition of heaven; the torrent of sedition rolled forwards to the gates of the palace; and the empress, agitated by fear or remorse, threw herself at the feet of Arcadius and confessed that the public safety could be purchased only by the restoration of Chrysostom.

The short interval of a perfidious truce was employed to concert more effectual measures for the disgrace and ruin of the archbishop. A numerous council of the Eastern prelates, who were guided from a distance by the advice of Theophilus, confirmed the validity, without examining the justice, of the former sentence; and a detachment of barbarian troops was introduced into the city, to suppress the emotions of the people. On the vigil of Easter, the solemn administration of baptism was rudely interrupted by the soldiers, who alarmed the modesty of the naked catechumens, and violated by their presence the awful mysteries of the Christian worship. Arsacius occupied the church of St. Sophia and the archiepiscopal throne. The Catholics retreated to the baths of Constantine, and afterwards to the fields; where they were still pursued and insulted by the guards, the bishops, and the magistrates. The fatal day of the second and final exile of Chrysostom was marked by the conflagration of the cathedral, of the senate house, and of the adjacent buildings; and this calamity was imputed, without proof but not without probability, to the despair of a persecuted faction.

Instead of listening to his humble prayer that he might be permitted to reside at Cyzicus or Nicomedia, the inflexible empress assigned for his exile the remote and desolate town of Cucusus, among the ridges of Mount Taurus in the Lesser Armenia. A secret hope was entertained that the archbishop might perish in a difficult and dangerous march of seventy days, in the heat

of summer, through the provinces of Asia Minor, where he was continually threatened by the hostile attacks of the Isaurians and the more implacable fury of the monks. Yet Chrysostom arrived in safety at the place of his confinement; and the three years which he spent at Cucusus, and the neighbouring town of Arabissus, were the last and most glorious of his life. His character was consecrated by absence and persecution; the faults of his administration were no longer remembered, but every tongue repeated the praises of his genius and virtue; and the respectful attention of the Christian world was fixed on a desert spot among the mountains of Taurus.

From that solitude the archbishop, his active mind invigorated by misfortunes, maintained a strict and frequent correspondence with the most distant provinces; exhorted the separate congregation of his faithful adherents to persevere in their allegiance; urged the destruction of the temples of Phœnicia, and the extirpation of heresy in the isle of Cyprus; extended his pastoral care to the missions of Persia and Scythia; negotiated, by his ambassadors, with the Roman pontiff and the emperor Honorius; and boldly appealed from a partial synod to the supreme tribunal of a free and general council. The mind of the illustrious exile was still independent; but his captive body was exposed to the revenge of the oppressors, who continued to abuse the name and authority of Arcadius. An order was despatched for the instant removal of Chrysostom to the extreme desert of Pityus; and his guards so faithfully obeyed their cruel instructions that, before he reached the sea-coast of the Euxine, he expired at Comana, in Pontus, in the sixtieth year of his age. The succeeding generation acknowledged his innocence and merit. The archbishops of the East, who might blush that their predecessors had been the enemies of Chrysostom, were gradually disposed, by the firmness of the Roman pontiff, to restore the honours of that venerable name. At the pious solicitation of the clergy and people of Constantinople, his relics, thirty years after his death, were transported from their obscure sepulchre to the royal city. The emperor Theodosius advanced to receive them as far as Chalcedon; and falling prostrate on the coffin implored, in the name of his guilty parents, Arcadius and Eudoxia, the forgiveness of the injured saint. Yet a reasonable doubt may be entertained whether any stain of hereditary guilt could be derived from Arcadius to his successor. Eudoxia was a young and beautiful woman, who indulged her passions and despised her husband; Count John enjoyed, at least, the confidence of the empress; and the public named him as the real father of Theodosius the Younger. The birth of a son was accepted, however, by the pious husband as an event the most fortunate and honourable to himself, to his family, and to the Eastern world. In less than four years afterwards, Eudoxia, in the bloom of youth, was destroyed by the consequence of a miscarriage (404), and in four more years (May, 408), after a reign (if we may abuse that word) of thirteen years, three months and fifteen days, Arcadius expired in the palace of Constantinople. It is impossible to delineate his character; since in a period very copiously furnished with historical materials, it has not been possible to remark one action that properly belongs to the son of the great Theodosius.[d]

# CHAPTER II. REIGN OF THEODOSIUS THE YOUNGER TO THE ELEVATION OF JUSTINIAN

[408–527 A.D.]

ARCADIUS was succeeded by his son Theodosius, who at the time of his father's death was a mere child. The Roman world was deeply interested in the education of its master. A regular course of study and exercise was judiciously instituted, of the military exercises of riding and shooting with the bow; of the liberal studies of grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy; the most skilful masters of the East ambitiously solicited the attention of their royal pupil, and several noble youths were introduced into the palace, to animate his diligence by the emulation of friendship. Pulcheria alone discharged the important task of instructing her brother in the arts of government; but her precepts may countenance some suspicion of the extent of her capacity or of the purity of her intentions.[1]

But Theodosius was never excited to support the weight and glory of an illustrious name; and instead of aspiring to imitate his ancestors, he degenerated (if we may presume to measure the degrees of incapacity) below the weakness of his father and his uncle. Arcadius and Honorius had been assisted by the guardian care of a parent whose lessons were enforced by his authority and example. But the unfortunate prince who is born in the purple must remain a stranger to the voice of truth; and the son of Arcadius was condemned to pass his perpetual infancy encompassed only by a servile train of women and eunuchs. The ample leisure which he acquired by neglecting the essential duties of his high office, was filled by idle amusements and unprofitable studies. Hunting was the only active pursuit that could tempt him beyond the limits of the palace; but he most assiduously laboured in the mechanic occupations of painting and carving; and the elegance with which he transcribed religious books entitled the Roman emperor to the singular epithet of Calligraphes, or a fair writer.

Separated from the world by an impenetrable veil, Theodosius trusted the persons whom he loved; he loved those who were accustomed to amuse

[1 The prætorian prefect Anthemius assumed the guidance of the state until Pulcheria was created augusta in 414, and, says Bury,[e] "the measures which were passed during these six years exhibit an intelligent and sincere solicitude for the welfare of the people and the correction of abuses." Anthemius protected the borders of Mœsia and Scythia against the Huns and materially assisted the Illyrian provinces to recover from the ravages of the Visigoths.]

and flatter his indolence, and as he never perused the papers that were presented for the royal signature, acts of injustice the most repugnant to his character were frequently perpetrated in his name. The emperor himself was chaste, temperate, liberal, and merciful; but these qualities, which can only deserve the name of virtues when they are supported by courage and regulated by discretion, were seldom beneficial and they sometimes proved mischievous to mankind. His mind, enervated by a royal education, was oppressed and degraded by abject superstition; he fasted, he sang psalms, he blindly accepted the miracles and doctrines with which his faith was continually nourished. He devoutly worshipped the dead and living saints of the Catholic church.

The story of a fair and virtuous maiden exalted from a private condition to the imperial throne might be deemed an incredible romance, if such a romance had not been verified in the marriage of Theodosius. The celebrated Athenais was educated by her father Leontius in the religion and sciences of the Greeks; and so advantageous was the opinion which the Athenian philosopher entertained of his contemporaries, that he divided his patrimony between his two sons, bequeathing to his daughter a small legacy of one hundred pieces of gold, in the lively confidence that her beauty and merit would be a sufficient portion. The jealousy and avarice of her brothers soon compelled Athenais to seek a refuge at Constantinople; and, with some hopes either of justice or favour, to throw herself at the feet of Pulcheria. That sagacious princess listened to her eloquent complaint; and secretly destined the daughter of the philosopher Leontius for the future wife of the emperor of the East, who had now attained the twentieth year of his age.

Athenais, who was easily persuaded to renounce the errors of paganism, received at her baptism the Christian name of Eudocia; but the cautious Pulcheria withheld the title of Augusta till the wife of Theodosius had approved her fruitfulness by the birth of a daughter, who espoused, fifteen years afterwards, the emperor of the West. The brothers of Eudocia obeyed, with some anxiety, her imperial summons; but as she could easily forgive their fortunate unkindness, she indulged the tenderness, or perhaps the vanity, of a sister, by promoting them to the rank of consuls and prefects. In the luxury of the palace she still cultivated those ingenuous arts which had contributed to her greatness; and wisely dedicated her talents to the honour of religion and of her husband. Eudocia composed a poetical paraphrase of the first eight books of the Old Testament, and of the prophecies of Daniel and Zachariah; a cento of the verses of Homer, applied to the life and miracles of Christ, the legend of St. Cyprian, and a panegyric on the Persian victories of Theodosius; and her writings, which were applauded by a servile and superstitious age, have not been disdained by the candour of impartial criticism.

The fondness of the emperor was not abated by time and possession; and Eudocia, after the marriage of her daughter, was permitted to discharge her grateful vows by a solemn pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Her ostentatious progress through the East may seem inconsistent with the spirit of Christian humility. She pronounced, from a throne of gold and gems, an eloquent oration to the senate of Antioch, declared her royal intention of enlarging the walls of the city, bestowed a donation of two hundred pounds of gold to restore the public baths, and accepted the statues which were decreed by the gratitude of Antioch. In the Holy Land, her alms and pious foundations exceeded the munificence of the great Helena; and she enjoyed the conscious satisfaction of returning to Constantinople with the chains of St. Peter, the right

arm of St. Stephen, and an undoubted picture of the Virgin painted by St. Luke.

But this pilgrimage was the fatal term of the glories of Eudocia. Satiated with empty pomp, and unmindful, perhaps, of her obligations to Pulcheria, she ambitiously aspired to the government of the Eastern Empire; the palace was distracted by female discord; but the victory was at last decided by the superior ascendancy of the sister of Theodosius. The execution of Paulinus, master of the offices, and the disgrace of Cyrus, prætorian prefect of the East, convinced the public that the favour of Eudocia was insufficient to protect her most faithful friends; and the uncommon beauty of Paulinus encouraged the secret rumour that his guilt was that of a successful lover. As soon as the empress perceived that the affection of Theodosius was irretrievably lost, she requested the permission of retiring to the distant solitude of Jerusalem. She obtained her request; but the jealousy of Theodosius, or the vindictive spirit of Pulcheria, pursued her in her last retreat; and Saturninus, count of the domestics, was directed to punish with death two ecclesiastics, her most favoured servants. Eudocia instantly revenged them by the assassination of the count; the furious passions which she indulged on this occasion seemed to justify the severity of Theodosius; and the empress, ignominiously stripped of the honours of her rank, was disgraced, perhaps unjustly, in the eyes of the world. The remainder of the life of Eudocia, about sixteen years, was spent in exile and devotion; and the approach of age, the death of Theodosius, the misfortunes of her only daughter, who was led a captive from Rome to Carthage, and the society of the holy monks of Palestine, insensibly confirmed the religious temper of her mind. After a full experience of the vicissitudes of human life, the daughter of the philosopher Leontius expired at Jerusalem, in the sixty-seventh year of her age; protesting with her dying breath that she had never transgressed the bounds of innocence and friendship (460).[1]

The gentle mind of Theodosius was never inflamed by the ambition of conquest or military renown, and the slight alarm of a Persian war scarcely interrupted the tranquillity of the East. The motives of this war were just and honourable. In the last year of the reign of Jezdegerd, the Persian king, a bishop, who aspired to the crown of martyrdom, destroyed one of the fire-temples of Susa. His zeal and obstinacy were revenged on his brethren: the Magi excited a cruel persecution; and the intolerant zeal of Jezdegerd was imitated by his son Varanes, or Bahram, who soon afterwards ascended the throne. Some Christian fugitives, who escaped to the Roman frontier, were sternly demanded and generously refused; and the refusal, aggravated by commercial disputes, soon kindled a war between the rival monarchies. The mountains of Armenia and the plains of Mesopotamia were filled with hostile armies; but the operations of two successive campaigns were not productive of any decisive events.

Some engagements were fought, some towns were besieged, with various and doubtful success; and if the Romans failed in their attempt to recover the long-lost possession of Nisibis, the Persians were repulsed from the walls of a Mesopotamian city by the valour of a martial bishop, who pointed his thundering engine in the name of St. Thomas the apostle. Yet the splendid victories which the incredible speed of the messenger Palladius repeatedly announced to the palace of Constantinople were celebrated with festivals and panegyrics. From these panegyrics the historians of the age might borrow their extraordinary and perhaps fabulous tales of the proud challenge of a Persian hero who was entangled by the net and despatched by the sword of Areobindus the Goth, of

the ten thousand *Immortals* who were slain in the attack on the Roman camp, and of the hundred thousand Arabs or Saracens who were impelled by a panic terror to throw themselves headlong into the Euphrates. Such events may be disbelieved or disregarded; but the charity of a bishop, Acacius of Amida, whose name might have dignified the saintly calendar, shall not be lost in oblivion. Boldly declaring that vases of gold and silver are useless to a god who neither eats nor drinks, the generous prelate sold the plate of the church of Amida, employed the price in the redemption of seven thousand Persian captives, supplied their wants with affectionate liberality, and dismissed them to their native country to inform their king of the true spirit of the religion which he persecuted. The practice of benevolence in the midst of war must always tend to assuage the animosity of contending nations; and we may perhaps believe that Acacius contributed to the restoration of peace. In the conference which was held on the limits of the two empires, the Roman ambassadors degraded the personal character of their sovereign by a vain attempt to magnify the extent of his power, when they seriously advised the Persians to prevent, by a timely accommodation, the wrath of a monarch who was yet ignorant of this distant war. A truce of one hundred years was solemnly ratified; and the essential conditions of this treaty were respected near four-score years by the successors of Constantine and Artaxerxes.[b]

Of the more peaceful events of the reign of Theodosius, the three that are chiefly to be remembered are the foundations of a university at Constantinople, the convocation of a great council of the church at Ephesus in 434, and the compilation of the Theodosian code of laws. The university was intended to supersede the one at Athens, and to promulgate Christian instead of pagan influences. The council at Ephesus takes an important place in church history, but its findings need not be elaborated here. The code was based on the models of the Gregorian and Hermogenian codes. A commission of nine persons, including Apelles, professor of law at the new university, were entrusted with the work of codification, which consisted chiefly of the collecting of constitutions due to Constantine and his successors. An idea of forming the code was entertained by Theodosius as early as the year 429, but the work was not completed and published until 439.

## THE COMING OF THE HUNS

But the event of all others for which the reign of Theodosius is best remembered was one in which he was the passive agent and victim rather than the hero. This event was the world-famous invasion of the Huns, who just at this period began to make themselves felt as a menace to the empires of the East and West. The remaining years of the life of Theodosius II were to be occupied, as we shall see, in contests with these invaders; but before we take up the details of that story it will be well to make inquiry as to the origin and racial characteristics of the invaders themselves. The question of the racial affinities of the Huns is indeed one that is still a matter of controversy. By various writers they have been connected with the Mongols, the Turks, the Ugrians, etc., but as yet no agreement has been reached that has placed the question on a safe basis. Howorth[c] points out that the Huns were known in Europe at an earlier date than those mentioned in the narratives of Ammianus Marcellinus and Jordanes, with whose accounts their history is usually supposed to begin. He notes that "Ptolemy (175-182 A.D.) mentions the Chunni between the Bastarnæ and Roxolani, and places them on the Dnieper," suggesting,

however, that the passage in question may be an interpolated one. They are authentically mentioned, however, by Dionysius Periegetes, about 200, "among the borderers of the Caspian, in this order: Scyths, Huns, Caspiani, Albani." But these are at best only vague and doubtful references.[a]

The authentic history of the Huns in Europe practically begins about the year 372 A.D., when under a leader named Balamir (or, according to some MSS., Balamber) they began a westward movement from their settlements in the steppes lying to the north of the Caspian. After crushing, or compelling the alliance of, various nations unknown to fame (Alpilzuri, Alcidzuir, Himari, Tuncarsi, Boisci), they at length reached the Alani, a powerful nation which had its seat between the Volga and the Don; these also, after a struggle, they defeated, and finally enlisted in their service. They then proceeded, after a short interval, in 374 to invade the empire of the Ostrogoths (Greuthungi), ruled over by the aged Ermanaric, or Hermanric, who died (perhaps by his own hand) while the critical attack was still impending. Under his son Hunimund a section of his subjects promptly made a humiliating peace; under Withemir (Winithar), however, who succeeded him in the larger part of his dominions, an armed resistance was organised; but it resulted only in repeated defeat, and finally in the death of the king. The representatives of his son Witheric put an end to the conflict by accepting the condition of vassalage. Balamir now directed his victorious arms still farther westward against that portion of the Visigothic nation (or Tervingi) which acknowledged the authority of Athanaric. The latter entrenched himself on the frontier which had separated him from the Ostrogoths, behind the "Greutung-rampart" and the Dniester; but notwithstanding all his precautions he was surprised by the enemy, who forded the river in the night, fell suddenly upon his camp, and compelled him to abandon his position. Athanaric next attempted to establish himself in the territory between the Pruth and the Danube, and with this object set about heightening the old Roman wall which Trajan had erected in north-eastern Dacia; before his fortifications, however, were complete, the Huns were again upon him, and without a battle he was forced to retreat to the Danube.

The remainder of the Visigoths, under Alavivus and Fritigern, now began to seek and ultimately were successful in obtaining (376) the permission of the emperor Valens to settle in Thrace; Athanaric meanwhile took refuge in Transylvania, thus abandoning the field without any serious struggle to the irresistible Huns. For more than fifty years the Roman world was undisturbed by any aggressive act on the part of the new invaders, who contented themselves with overpowering various other tribes which lived to the north of the Danube. In some instances, in fact, the Huns actually lent their aid to the Romans against third parties; thus in 404-5 certain Hunnic tribes, under a chief or king named Uldin, assisted Honorius in the struggle with Radagaisus (Ratigar) and his Ostrogoths, and took a prominent part in the decisive battle which was fought in the neighbourhood of Florence. Once indeed, in 409, they are said to have crossed the Danube and invaded Bulgaria under perhaps the same chief (Uldis), but extensive desertions soon compelled a retreat.[f]

This brings us to about the period when the Huns came in contact with Theodosius II. We may complete our picture of the manner of people that thus menaced the eastern empire, by quoting the account of their characteristics given by Ammianus Marcellinus, who lived in the latter half of the fourth century, and who therefore speaks as a contemporary. After hearing his account of a barbarous foe whom he had perhaps met in the field, we shall take up in particular the story of Attila, the great chieftain who made his name a terror even to the proud wearers of the Roman purple.[a]

AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS DESCRIBES THE HUNS

They never shelter themselves under roofed houses, but avoid them as people ordinarily avoid sepulchres, as things not fitted for common use. Nor is there even to be found among them a cabin thatched with reeds: but they wander about, roaming over the mountains and the woods, and accustom themselves to bear frost and hunger and thirst from their very cradles. And even when abroad they never enter a house unless under the compulsion of extreme necessity; nor, indeed, do they think people under roofs as safe as others.

They wear linen clothes, or else garments made of the skins of field-mice; nor do they wear a different dress out of doors from that which they wear at home; but after a tunic is once put round their necks, however it becomes worn, it is never taken off or changed till, from long decay, it becomes actually so ragged as to fall to pieces.

They cover their heads with round caps, and their shaggy legs with the skins of kids; their shoes are not made on any lasts, but are so unshapely as to hinder them from walking with a free gait. And for this reason they are not well suited to infantry battles, but are nearly always on horseback, their horses being ill shaped, but hardy; and sometimes they even sit upon them like women if they want to do anything more conveniently. There is not a person in the whole nation who cannot remain on his horse day and night. On horseback they buy and sell, they take their meat and drink, and there they recline on the narrow neck of their steed, and yield to sleep so deep as to indulge in every variety of dream.

And when any deliberation is to take place on any weighty matter, they all hold their common council on horseback. They are not under the authority of a king, but are contented with the irregular government of their nobles, and under their lead they force their way through all obstacles.

Sometimes when provoked, they fight; and when they go into battle, they form in a solid body, and utter all kinds of terrific yells. They are very quick in their operations, of exceeding speed, and fond of surprising their enemies. With a view to this, they suddenly disperse, then reunite, and again, after having inflicted vast loss upon the enemy, scatter themselves over the whole plain in irregular formations; always avoiding a fort or an entrenchment.

And in one respect you may pronounce them the most formidable of all warriors, for when at a distance they use missiles of various kinds tipped with sharpened bones instead of the usual points of javelins, and these bones are admirably fastened into the shaft of the javelin or arrow; but when they are at close quarters they fight with the sword, without any regard for their own safety; and often while their antagonists are warding off their blows they entangle them with twisted cords, so that, their hands being fettered, they lose all power of either riding or walking.

None of them plough, or even touch a plough-handle; for they have no settled abode, but are homeless and lawless, perpetually wandering with their wagons, which they make their homes; in fact they seem to be people always in flight. Their wives live in these wagons, and there weave their miserable garments; and here too they sleep with their husbands, and bring up their children till they reach the age of puberty; nor, if asked, can any one of them tell you where he was born, as he was conceived in one place, born in another at a great distance, and brought up in another still more remote.[d]

## ATTILA, KING OF THE HUNS

The Western world was oppressed by the Goths and Vandals, who fled before the Huns; but the achievements of the Huns themselves were not adequate to their power and prosperity. Their victorious hordes had spread from the Volga to the Danube, but the public force was exhausted by the discord of independent chieftains; their valour was idly consumed in obscure and predatory excursions; and they often degraded their national dignity by condescending, for the hopes of spoil, to enlist under the banners of their fugitive enemies. In the reign of Attila, the Huns again became the terror of the world; and we shall now describe the character and actions of that formidable barbarian, who alternately insulted and invaded the East and the West, and urged the rapid downfall of the Roman Empire.

In the tide of emigration which impetuously rolled from the confines of China to those of Germany, the most powerful and populous tribes may commonly be found on the verge of the Roman provinces. The accumulated weight was sustained for a while by artificial barriers; and the easy condescension of the emperors invited, without satisfying, the insolent demands of the barbarians, who had acquired an eager appetite for the luxuries of civilised life. The Hungarians, who ambitiously insert the name of Attila among their native kings, may affirm with truth that the hordes which were subject to his uncle Roas (Ruas) or Rugilas had formed their encampments within the limits of modern Hungary, in a fertile country which liberally supplied the wants of a nation of hunters and shepherds.

In this advantageous situation, Rugilas and his valiant brothers, who continually added to their power and reputation, commanded the alternative of peace or war with the two empires. His alliance with the Romans of the West was cemented by his personal friendship for the great Aëtius, who was always secure of finding, in the barbarian camp, a hospitable reception and a powerful support. At his solicitation, and in the name of Joannes the usurper, sixty thousand Huns advanced to the confines of Italy; their march and their retreat were alike expensive to the state; and the grateful policy of Aëtius abandoned the possession of Pannonia to his faithful confederates.

The Romans of the East were not less apprehensive of the arms of Rugilas, which threatened the provinces, or even the capital. Some ecclesiastical historians have destroyed the barbarians with lightning and pestilence; but Theodosius was reduced to the more humble expedient of stipulating an annual payment of 350 pounds of gold, and of disguising this dishonourable tribute by the title of general, which the king of the Huns condescended to accept. The public tranquillity was frequently interrupted by the fierce impatience of the barbarians and the perfidious intrigues of the Byzantine court. Four dependent nations, among whom we may distinguish the Bavarians, disclaimed the sovereignty of the Huns; and their revolt was encouraged and protected by a Roman alliance, till the just claims and formidable power of Rugilas were effectually urged by the voice of Eslaw his ambassador. Peace was the unanimous wish of the senate. Their decree was ratified by the emperor; and two ambassadors were named, Plinthas, a general of Scythian extraction but of consular rank, and the quæstor Epigenes, a wise and experienced statesman, who was recommended to that office by his ambitious colleague.

The death of Rugilas suspended the progress of the treaty. His two nephews, Attila and Bleda, who succeeded to the throne of their uncle, consented to a personal interview with the ambassadors of Constantinople; but

[434 A.D.]

as they proudly refused to dismount, the business was transacted on horseback, in a spacious plain near the city of Margus, in the upper Mœsia. The kings of the Huns assumed the solid benefits as well as the vain honours of the negotiation. They dictated the conditions of peace, and each condition was an insult to the majesty of the empire. Besides the freedom of a safe and plentiful market on the banks of the Danube, they required that the annual contribution should be augmented from 350 to 700 pounds of gold; that a fine or ransom of eight pieces of gold should be paid for every Roman captive who had escaped from his barbarian master; that the emperor should renounce all treaties and engagements with the enemies of the Huns; and that all the fugitives who had taken refuge in the court or provinces of Theodosius should be delivered to the justice of their offended sovereign. This justice was rigorously inflicted on some unfortunate youths of a royal race. They were crucified on the territories of the empire, by the command of Attila; and as soon as the king of the Huns had impressed the Romans with the terror of his name, he indulged them in a short and arbitrary respite, whilst he subdued the rebellious or independent nations of Scythia and Germany.

COSTUME OF A BYZANTINE EMPEROR

Attila, the son of Mundzuk, deduced his noble, perhaps his regal descent from the ancient Huns, who had formerly contended with the monarchs of China. His features, according to the observation of a Gothic historian, bore the stamp of his national origin, and the portrait of Attila exhibits the genuine deformity of a modern Kalmuck; a large head, a swarthy complexion, small deep-seated eyes, a flat nose, a few hairs in the place of a beard, broad shoulders, and a short square body, of nervous strength though of a disproportioned form. The haughty step and demeanour of the king of the Huns expressed the consciousness of his superiority above the rest of mankind; and he had a custom of fiercely rolling his eyes, as if he wished to enjoy the terror which he inspired. Yet this savage hero was not inaccessible to pity; his suppliant enemies might confide in the assurance of peace or pardon, and Attila was considered by his subjects as a just and indulgent master. He delighted in war; but after he had ascended the throne in a mature age, his head, rather than his hand, achieved the conquest of the north; and the fame of an adventurous soldier was usefully exchanged for that of a prudent and successful general.

The effects of personal valour are so inconsiderable, except in poetry or romance, that victory, even among barbarians, must depend on the degree of skill with which the passions of the multitude are combined and guided for the service of a single man. The Scythian conquerors, Attila and Jenghiz, surpassed their rude countrymen in art rather than in courage; and it may

be observed that the monarchies, both of the Huns and of the Mongols, were erected by their founders on the basis of popular superstition. The miraculous conception which fraud and credulity ascribed to the virgin mother of Jenghiz, raised him above the level of human nature; and the naked prophet, who, in the name of the Deity, invested him with the empire of the earth, pointed the valour of the Mongols with irresistible enthusiasm. The religious arts of Attila were not less skilfully adapted to the character of his age and country.

It was natural enough that the Scythians should adore, with peculiar devotion, the god of war; but as they were incapable of forming either an abstract idea or a corporeal representation, they worshipped their tutelar deity under the symbol of an iron scimitar. One of the shepherds of the Huns perceived that a heifer, who was grazing, had wounded herself in the foot, and curiously followed the track of the blood till he discovered, among the long grass, the point of an ancient sword, which he dug out of the ground and presented to Attila. That magnanimous, or rather that artful prince accepted with pious gratitude this celestial favour; and, as the rightful possessor of the sword of Mars, asserted his divine and indefeasible claim to the dominion of the earth.

BYZANTINE IMPERIAL GUARD

If the rites of Scythia were practised on this solemn occasion, a lofty altar, or rather pile of fagots, three hundred yards in length and in breadth, was raised in a spacious plain; and the sword of Mars was placed erect on the summit of this rustic altar, which was annually consecrated by the blood of sheep, horses, and of the hundredth captive. Whether human sacrifices formed any part of the worship of Attila, or whether he propitiated the god of war with the victims which he continually offered in the field of battle, the favourite of Mars soon acquired a sacred character, which rendered his conquests more easy and more permanent; and the barbarian princes confessed, in the language of devotion or flattery, that they could not presume to gaze with a steady eye on the divine majesty of the king of the Huns. His brother Bleda, who reigned over a considerable part of the nation, was compelled to resign his sceptre and his life. Yet even this cruel act was attributed to a supernatural impulse; and the vigour with which Attila wielded the sword of Mars convinced the world that it had been reserved alone for his invincible arm. But the extent of his empire affords the only remaining evidence of the number and importance of his victories; and the Scythian monarch, however ignorant of the value of science and philosophy, might perhaps lament that his illiterate subjects were destitute of the art which could perpetuate the memory of his exploits.

If a line of separation were drawn between the civilised and the savage climates of the globe, between the inhabitants of cities who cultivated the earth and the hunters and shepherds who dwelt in tents, Attila might aspire to the title of supreme and sole monarch of the barbarians. He alone,

[444 A.D.]
among the conquerors of ancient and modern times, united the two mighty kingdoms of Germany and Scythia; and those vague appellations, when they are applied to his reign, may be understood with an ample latitude. Thuringia, which stretched beyond its actual limits as far as the Danube, was in the number of his provinces; he interposed, with the weight of a powerful neighbour, in the domestic affairs of the Franks; and one of his lieutenants chastised, and almost exterminated, the Burgundians of the Rhine. He subdued the islands of the ocean, the kingdoms of Scandinavia, encompassed and divided by the waters of the Baltic; and the Huns might derive a tribute of furs from that northern region which has been protected from all other conquerors by the severity of the climate and the courage of the natives.

Towards the east it is difficult to circumscribe the dominion of Attila over the Scythian deserts; yet we may be assured that he reigned on the banks of the Volga; that the king of the Huns was dreaded, not only as a warrior, but as a magician; that he insulted and vanquished the khan of the formidable Geougen; and that he sent ambassadors to negotiate an equal alliance with the empire of China. In the proud review of the nations who acknowledged the sovereignty of Attila and who never entertained, during his lifetime, the thought of a revolt, the Gepidæ and the Ostrogoths were distinguished by their numbers, their bravery, and the personal merit of their chiefs.

The ambassadors of the Huns might awaken the attention of Theodosius by reminding him that they were his neighbours, both in Europe and Asia; since they touched the Danube on one hand, and reached with the other as far as the Tanais. In the reign of his father Arcadius, a band of adventurous Huns had ravaged the provinces of the East; from whence they brought away rich spoils and innumerable captives. They advanced, by a secret path, along the shores of the Caspian Sea; traversed the snowy mountains of Armenia; passed the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Halys; recruited their weary cavalry with the generous breed of Cappadocian horses; occupied the hilly country of Cilicia, and disturbed the festal songs and dances of the citizens of Antioch. Egypt trembled at their approach; and the monks and pilgrims of the Holy Land prepared to escape their fury by a speedy embarkation. The memory of this invasion was still recent in the minds of the Orientals. The subjects of Attila might execute, with superior forces, the design which these adventurers had so boldly attempted; and it soon became the subject of anxious conjecture whether the tempest would fall on the dominions of Rome or of Persia.

Some of the great vassals of the king of the Huns, who were themselves in the rank of powerful princes, had been sent to ratify an alliance and society of arms with the emperor, or rather with the general, of the West. They related, during their residence at Rome, the circumstances of an expedition which they had lately made into the East. After passing a desert and a morass, supposed by the Romans to be the lake Mæotis, they penetrated through the mountains, and arrived at the end of fifteen days' march on the confines of Media, where they advanced as far as the unknown cities of Basic and Cursic. They encountered the Persian army in the plains of Media; and the air, according to their own expression, was darkened by a cloud of arrows. But the Huns were obliged to retire before the numbers of the enemy. Their laborious retreat was effected by a different road; they lost the greatest part of their booty; and at length returned to the royal camp, with some knowledge of the country and an impatient desire for revenge.

In the free conversation of the imperial ambassadors, who discussed at the court of Attila the character and designs of their formidable enemy, the ministers of Constantinople expressed their hope that his strength might be diverted and employed in a long and doubtful contest with the princes of the house of Sassan. The more sagacious Italians admonished their Eastern brethren of the folly and danger of such a hope, and convinced them that the Medes and Persians were incapable of resisting the arms of the Huns; and that the easy and important acquisition would exalt the pride as well as power of the conqueror. Instead of contenting himself with a moderate contribution and a military title, which equalled him only to the generals of Theodosius, Attila would proceed to impose a disgraceful and intolerable yoke on the necks of the prostrate and captive Romans, who would then be encompassed on all sides by the empire of the Huns.

While the powers of Europe and Asia were solicitous to avert the impending danger, the alliance of Attila maintained the Vandals in the possession of Africa. An enterprise had been concerted between the courts of Ravenna and Constantinople for the recovery of that valuable province; and the ports of Sicily were already filled with the military and naval forces of Theodosius. But the subtle Genseric, who spread his negotiations round the world, prevented their designs, by exciting the king of the Huns to invade the Eastern Empire; and a trifling incident soon became the motive, or pretence, of a destructive war.

Under the faith of the treaty of Margus, a free market was held on the northern side of the Danube, which was protected by a Roman fortress, surnamed Constantia. A troop of barbarians violated the commercial security; killed or dispersed the unsuspecting traders, and levelled the fortress with the ground. The Huns justified this outrage as an act of reprisal; alleged that the bishop of Margus had entered their territories, to discover and steal a secret treasure of their kings; and sternly demanded the guilty prelate, the sacrilegious spoil, and the fugitive subjects who had escaped from the justice of Attila. The refusal of the Byzantine court was the signal of war; and the Mœsians at first applauded the generous firmness of their sovereign. But they were soon intimidated by the destruction of Viminiacum and the adjacent towns; and the people was persuaded to adopt the convenient maxim that a private citizen, however innocent or respectable, may be justly sacrificed to the safety of his country. The bishop of Margus, who did not possess the spirit of a martyr, resolved to prevent the designs which he suspected. He boldly treated with the princes of the Huns; secured, by solemn oaths, his pardon and reward; posted a numerous detachment of barbarians in silent ambush on the banks of the Danube; and, at the appointed hour, opened with his own hand the gates of his episcopal city. This advantage, which had been obtained by treachery, served as a prelude to more honourable and decisive victories.

The Illyrian frontier was covered by a line of castles and fortresses; and though the greatest part of them consisted only of a single tower, with a small garrison, they were commonly sufficient to repel, or to intercept, the inroads of an enemy, who was ignorant of the art and impatient of the delay of a regular siege. But these slight obstacles were instantly swept away by the inundation of the Huns. They destroyed, with fire and sword, the populous cities of Sirmium and Singidunum, of Ratiaria and Marcianopolis, of Naissus and Sardica; where every circumstance of the discipline of the people and the construction of the buildings had been gradually adapted to the sole purpose of defence. The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five

[447 A.D.]
hundred miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated, by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field. The public danger and distress could not, however, provoke Theodosius to interrupt his amusements and devotion, or to appear in person at the head of the Roman legions. But the troops which had been sent against Genseric were hastily recalled from Sicily, the garrisons on the side of Persia were exhausted; and a military force was collected in Europe, formidable by their arms and numbers, if the generals had understood the science of command and their soldiers the duty of obedience. The armies of the Eastern Empire were vanquished in three successive engagements; and the progress of Attila may be traced by the fields of battle. The two former, on the banks of the Utus and under the walls of Marcianopolis, were fought in the extensive plains between the Danube and Mount Hæmus. [In the latter battle Arnegisclus, the Roman commander, was slain.]

As the Romans were pressed by a victorious enemy, they gradually, and unskilfully, retired towards the Chersonesus of Thrace; and that narrow peninsula, the last extremity of the land, was marked by their third and irreparable defeat. By the destruction of this army Attila acquired the indisputable possession of the field. From the Hellespont to Thermopylæ and the suburbs of Constantinople, he ravaged, without resistance and without mercy, the provinces of Thrace and Macedonia. Heraclea and Hadrianopolis might perhaps escape this dreadful irruption of the Huns; but the words the most expressive of total extirpation and erasure are applied to the calamities which they inflicted on seventy cities of the Eastern Empire. Theodosius, his court, and the unwarlike people, were protected by the walls of Constantinople; but those walls had been shaken by a recent earthquake, and the fall of fifty-eight towers had opened a large and tremendous breach. The damage indeed was speedily repaired; but this accident was aggravated by a superstitious fear that heaven itself had delivered the imperial city to the shepherds of Scythia, who were strangers to the laws, the language, and the religion of the Romans.

In all their invasions of the civilised empires of the south, the Scythian shepherds have been uniformly actuated by a savage and destructive spirit. The laws of war, that restrain the exercise of national rapine and murder, are founded on two principles of substantial interest—the knowledge of the permanent benefits which may be obtained by a moderate use of conquest, and a just apprehension, lest the desolation which we inflict on the enemy's country may be retaliated on our own. But these considerations of hope and fear are almost unknown in the pastoral state of nations. The Huns of Attila may, without injustice, be compared to the Moguls and Tatars, before their primitive manners were changed by religion and luxury; and the evidence of oriental history may reflect some light on the short and imperfect annals of Rome.

After the Mongols had subdued the northern provinces of China, it was seriously proposed, not in the hour of victory and passion but in calm, deliberate council, to exterminate all the inhabitants of that populous country, that the vacant land might be converted to the pasture of cattle. The firmness of a Chinese mandarin, who insinuated some principles of rational policy into the mind of Jenghiz, diverted him from the execution of this horrid design. But in the cities of Asia, which yielded to the Mongols, the inhuman abuse of the rights of war was exercised with a regular form of discipline, which may, with equal reason though not with equal authority, be imputed to the victorious Huns.

The three great capitals of Khorasan, Maru, Neisabur, and Herat were destroyed by the armies of Jenghiz; and the exact account which was taken of the slain amounted to 4,347,000 persons. Timur, or Tamerlane, was educated in a less barbarous age, and in the profession of the Mohammedan religion; yet, if Attila equalled the hostile ravages of Tamerlane, either the Tatar or the Hun might deserve the epithet of the Scourge of God.

It may be affirmed with bolder assurance that the Huns depopulated the provinces of the empire, by the number of Roman subjects whom they led away into captivity. In the hands of a wise legislator, such an industrious colony might have contributed to diffuse through the deserts of Scythia the rudiments of the useful and ornamental arts; but these captives, who had been taken in war, were accidentally dispersed among the hordes that obeyed the empire of Attila. The estimate of their respective value was formed by the simple judgment of unenlightened and unprejudiced barbarians. Perhaps they might not understand the merit of a theologian, profoundly skilled in the controversies of the Trinity and the Incarnation; yet they respected the ministers of every religion, and the active zeal of the Christian missionaries, without approaching the person or the palace of the monarch, successfully laboured in the propagation of the gospel.

The pastoral tribes, who were ignorant of the distinction of landed property, must have disregarded the use, as well as the abuse, of civil jurisprudence; and the skill of an eloquent lawyer could excite only their contempt or their abhorrence. The perpetual intercourse of the Huns and the Goths had communicated the familiar knowledge of the two national dialects; and the barbarians were ambitious of conversing in Latin, the military idiom even of the Eastern Empire. But they disdained the language and the sciences of the Greeks; and the vain sophist, or grave philosopher, who had enjoyed the flattering applause of the schools, was mortified to find that his robust servant was a captive of more value and importance than himself. The mechanic arts were encouraged and esteemed, as they tended to satisfy the wants of the Huns.

An architect in the service of Onegesius, one of the favourites of Attila, was employed to construct a bath; but this work was a rare example of private luxury; and the trades of the smith, the carpenter, the armourer, were much more adapted to supply the wandering people with the useful instruments of peace and war. But the merit of the physician was received with universal favour and respect; the barbarians, who despised death, might be apprehensive of disease; and the haughty conqueror trembled in the presence of a captive to whom he ascribed, perhaps, an imaginary power of prolonging or preserving his life. The Huns might be provoked to insult the misery of their slaves, over whom they exercised a despotic command; but their manners were not susceptible of a refined system of oppression, and the efforts of courage and diligence were often recompensed by the gift of freedom.

### THE DIPLOMACY OF ATTILA

The timid or selfish policy of the western Romans had abandoned the Eastern Empire to the Huns. The loss of armies and the want of discipline or virtue were not supplied by the personal character of the monarch. Theodosius might still affect the style as well as the title of Invincible Augustus; but he was reduced to solicit the clemency of Attila, who imperiously dictated these harsh and humiliating conditions of peace.

(1) The emperor of the East resigned, by an express or tacit convention, an extensive and important territory which stretched along the southern banks of the Danube, from Singidunum or Belgrade as far as Novæ, in the diocese of Thrace. The breadth was defined by the vague computation of fifteen days' journey; but from the proposal of Attila to remove the situation of the national market, it soon appeared that he comprehended the ruined city of Naissus within the limits of his dominions.

(2) The king of the Huns required, and obtained, that his tribute or subsidy should be augmented from seven hundred pounds of gold to the annual sum of twenty-one hundred; and he stipulated the immediate payment of six thousand pounds of gold to defray the expenses, or to expiate the guilt, of the war. One might imagine that such a demand, which scarcely equalled the measure of private wealth, would have been readily discharged by the opulent Empire of the East; and the public distress affords a remarkable proof of the impoverished or at least of the disorderly state of the finances. A large proportion of the taxes, extorted from the people, was detained and intercepted in its passage through the foulest channels to the treasury of Constantinople. The revenue was dissipated by Theodosius and his favourites in wasteful and profuse luxury; which was disguised by the names of imperial magnificence or Christian charity. The immediate supplies had been exhausted by the unforeseen necessity of military preparations. A personal contribution, rigorously but capriciously imposed on the members of the senatorian order, was the only expedient that could disarm, without loss of time, the impatient avarice of Attila; and the poverty of the nobles compelled them to adopt the scandalous resource of exposing to public auction the jewels of their wives and the hereditary ornaments of their palaces.

The king of the Huns appears to have established, as a principle of national jurisprudence, that he could never lose the property which he had once acquired, in the persons who had yielded either a voluntary or reluctant submission to his authority. From this principle he concluded, and the conclusions of Attila were irrevocable laws, that the Huns who had been taken prisoners in war should be released without delay and without ransom; that every Roman captive who had presumed to escape should purchase his right to freedom at the price of twelve pieces of gold; and that all the barbarians who had deserted the standard of Attila should be restored, without any promise or stipulation of pardon. In the execution of this cruel and ignominious treaty, the imperial officers were forced to massacre several loyal and noble deserters, who refused to devote themselves to certain death; and the Romans forfeited all reasonable claims to the friendship of any Scythian people, by this public confession that they were destitute either of faith or power to protect the suppliant who had embraced the throne of Theodosius.

The firmness of a single town, so obscure that, except on this occasion, it has never been mentioned by any historian or geographer, exposed the disgrace of the emperor and empire. Azimus, or Azimuntium, a small city of Thrace on the Illyrian borders, had been distinguished by the martial spirit of its youth, the skill and reputation of the leaders whom they had chosen, and their daring exploits against the innumerable host of the barbarians. Instead of tamely expecting their approach, the Azimuntines attacked, in frequent and successful sallies, the troops of the Huns, who gradually declined the dangerous neighbourhood; rescued from their hands the spoil and the captives, and recruited their domestic force by the voluntary association of fugitives and deserters.

After the conclusion of the treaty, Attila still menaced the empire with implacable war unless the Azimuntines were persuaded or compelled to comply with the conditions which their sovereign had accepted. The ministers of Theodosius confessed with shame and with truth that they no longer possessed any authority over a society of men who so bravely asserted their natural independence; and the king of the Huns condescended to negotiate an equal exchange with the citizens of Azimus. They demanded the restitution of some shepherds, who, with their cattle, had been accidentally surprised. A strict, though fruitless, inquiry was allowed; but the Huns were obliged to swear that they did not detain any prisoners belonging to the city, before they could recover two surviving countrymen whom the Azimuntines had reserved as pledges for the safety of their lost companions.

Attila, on his side, was satisfied, and deceived, by their solemn asseveration that the rest of the captives had been put to the sword, and that it was their constant practice immediately to dismiss the Romans and the deserters, who had obtained the security of the public faith. This prudent and officious dissimulation may be condemned or excused by the casuists as they incline to the rigid decree of St. Augustine or to the milder sentiment of St. Jerome and St. Chrysostom; but every soldier, every statesman, must acknowledge that if the race of the Azimuntines had been encouraged and multiplied, the barbarians would have ceased to trample on the majesty of the empire.

It would have been strange, indeed, if Theodosius had purchased by the loss of honour a secure and solid tranquillity; or if his tameness had not invited the repetition of injuries. The Byzantine court was insulted by five or six successive embassies, and the ministers of Attila were uniformly instructed to press the tardy or imperfect execution of the last treaty; to produce the names of fugitives and deserters, who were still protected by the empire; and to declare, with seeming moderation, that unless their sovereign obtained complete and immediate satisfaction, it would be impossible for him, were it even his wish, to check the resentment of his warlike tribes.

Besides the motives of pride and interest which might prompt the king of the Huns to continue this train of negotiation, he was influenced by the less honourable view of enriching his favourites at the expense of his enemies. The imperial treasury was exhausted to procure the friendly offices of the ambassadors and their principal attendants, whose favourable report might conduce to the maintenance of peace. The barbarian monarch was flattered by the liberal reception of his ministers; he computed with pleasure the value and splendour of their gifts, rigorously exacted the performance of every promise which would contribute to their private emolument, and treated as an important business of state the marriage of his secretary Constantius. That Gallic adventurer, who was recommended by Aëtius to the king of the Huns, had engaged his service to the ministers of Constantinople for the stipulated reward of a wealthy and noble wife; and the daughter of Count Saturninus was chosen to discharge the obligations of her country. The reluctance of the victim, some domestic troubles, and the unjust confiscation of her fortune, cooled the ardour of her interested lover; but he still demanded, in the name of Attila, an equivalent alliance; and, after many ambiguous delays and excuses, the Byzantine court was compelled to sacrifice to this insolent stranger the widow of Armatius, whose birth, opulence, and beauty placed her in the most illustrious rank of the Roman matrons.

[448 A.D.]

For these importunate and oppressive embassies, Attila claimed a suitable return; he weighed, with suspicious pride, the character and station of the imperial envoys; but he condescended to promise that he would advance as far as Sardica, to receive any ministers who had been invested with the consular dignity. The council of Theodosius eluded this proposal by representing the desolate and ruined condition of Sardica; and even ventured to insinuate that every officer of the army or household was qualified to treat with the most powerful princes of Scythia. Maximin, a respectable courtier, whose abilities had been long exercised in civil and military employments, accepted with reluctance the troublesome, and perhaps dangerous, commission of reconciling the angry spirit of the king of the Huns. His friend, the historian Priscus, embraced the opportunity of observing the barbarian hero in the peaceful and domestic scenes of life; but the secret of the embassy, a fatal and guilty secret, was intrusted only to the interpreter Vigilius. The two last ambassadors of the Huns, Orestes a noble subject of the Pannonian province, and Edecon a valiant chieftain of the tribe of the Scyrri, returned at the same time from Constantinople to the royal camp. Their obscure names were afterwards illustrated by the extraordinary fortune and the contrast of their sons; the two servants of Attila became the fathers of the last Roman emperor of the West and of the first barbarian king of Italy.

WEAPONS OF THE HUNS

The ambassadors, who were followed by a numerous train of men and horses, made their first halt at Sardica at the distance of 350 miles, or thirteen days' journey from Constantinople. As the remains of Sardica were still included within the limits of the empire, it was incumbent on the Romans to exercise the duties of hospitality. They provided, with the assistance of the provincials, a sufficient number of sheep and oxen; and invited the Huns to a splendid or at least a plentiful supper. But the harmony of the entertainment was soon disturbed by mutual prejudice and indiscretion.

The greatness of the emperor and the empire was warmly maintained by their ministers; the Huns with equal ardour asserted the superiority of their victorious monarch. The dispute was inflamed by the rash and unseasonable flattery of Vigilius, who passionately rejected the comparison of a mere mortal with the divine Theodosius; and it was with extreme difficulty that Maximin and Priscus were able to divert the conversation, or to soothe the angry minds of the barbarians. When they rose from table, the imperial ambassador presented Edecon and Orestes with rich gifts of silk robes and Indian pearls, which they thankfully accepted. Yet Orestes could not forbear insinuating that he had not always been treated with such respect and liberality; and the offensive distinction which was implied, between his civil office and the hereditary rank of his colleague, seems to have made Edecon a doubtful friend and Orestes an irreconcilable enemy.

After this entertainment, they travelled about one hundred miles from Sardica to Naissus. That flourishing city, which had given birth to the great Constantine, was levelled with the ground; the inhabitants were

destroyed or dispersed; and the appearance of some sick persons, who were still permitted to exist among the ruins of the churches, served only to increase the horror of the prospect. The surface of the country was covered with the bones of the slain; and the ambassadors, who directed their course to the northwest, were obliged to pass the hills of modern Servia, before they descended into the flat and marshy grounds which are terminated by the Danube.

When Attila first gave audience to the Roman ambassadors on the banks of the Danube, his tent was encompassed with a formidable guard. The monarch himself was seated in a wooden chair. His stern countenance, angry gestures, and impatient tone astonished the firmness of Maximin; but Vigilius had more reason to tremble, since he distinctly understood the menace that, if Attila did not respect the law of nations, he would nail the deceitful interpreter to a cross and leave his body to the vultures. The Romans, both of the East and of the West, were twice invited to the banquets where Attila feasted with the princes and nobles of Scythia. Maximin and his colleagues were stopped on the threshold till they had made a devout libation to the health and prosperity of the king of the Huns, and were conducted after this ceremony to their respective seats in a spacious hall. Before they retired they enjoyed an opportunity of observing the manners of the nation in their convivial amusements. In the midst of intemperate riots, Attila alone, without a change of countenance, maintained his steadfast and inflexible gravity, which was never relaxed, except on the entrance of Irnac, the youngest of his sons; he embraced the boy with a smile of paternal tenderness, gently pinched him by the cheek, and betrayed a partial affection which was justified by the assurance of his prophets that Irnac would be the future support of his family and empire.

Two days afterwards the ambassadors received a second invitation; and they had reason to praise the politeness as well as the hospitality of Attila. The king of the Huns held a long and familiar conversation with Maximin; but his civility was interrupted by rude expressions and haughty reproaches; and he was provoked, by a motive of interest, to support with unbecoming zeal the private claims of his secretary, Constantius. "The emperor," said Attila, "has long promised him a rich wife; Constantius must not be disappointed; nor should a Roman emperor deserve the name of liar." On the third day the ambassadors were dismissed; the freedom of several captives was granted, for a moderate ransom, to their pressing entreaties; and, besides the royal presents, they were permitted to accept from each of the Scythian nobles the honourable and useful gift of a horse. Maximin returned by the same road to Constantinople; and, though he was involved in an accidental dispute with Beric, the new ambassador of Attila, he flattered himself that he had contributed, by the laborious journey, to confirm the peace and alliance of the two nations.

### ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE ATTILA

But the Roman ambassador was ignorant of the treacherous design which had been concealed under the mask of the public faith. The surprise and satisfaction of Edecon, when he contemplated the splendour of Constantinople, had encouraged the interpreter Vigilius to procure for him a secret interview with the eunuch Chrysaphius, who governed the emperor and the empire. After some previous conversation and a mutual oath of

secrecy, the eunuch, who had not from his own feelings or experience imbibed any exalted notions of ministerial virtue, ventured to propose the death of Attila, as an important service by which Edecon might deserve a liberal share of the wealth and luxury which he admired. The ambassador of the Huns listened to the tempting offer; and professed, with apparent zeal, his ability as well as readiness to execute the bloody deed; the design was communicated to the master of the offices, and the devout Theodosius consented to the assassination of his invincible enemy. But this perfidious conspiracy was defeated by the dissimulation or repentance of Edecon; and, though he might exaggerate his inward abhorrence for the treason which he seemed to approve, he dexterously assumed the merit of an early and voluntary confession.

If we now review the embassy of Maximin, and the behaviour of Attila, we must applaud the barbarian, who respected the laws of hospitality and generously entertained and dismissed the minister of a prince who had conspired against his life. But the rashness of Vigilius will appear still more extraordinary, since he returned, conscious of his guilt and danger, to the royal camp, accompanied by his son and carrying with him a weighty purse of gold, which the favourite eunuch had furnished to satisfy the demands of Edecon, and to corrupt the fidelity of the guards. The interpreter was instantly seized and dragged before the tribunal of Attila, where he asserted his innocence with specious firmness, till the threat of inflicting instant death on his son extorted from him a sincere discovery of the criminal transaction.

Under the name of ransom or confiscation, the rapacious king of the Huns accepted two hundred pounds of gold for the life of a traitor whom he disdained to punish. He pointed his just indignation against a nobler object. His ambassadors, Eslaw and Orestes, were immediately despatched to Constantinople, with a peremptory instruction which it was much safer for them to execute than to disobey. They boldly entered the imperial presence, with the fatal purse hanging down from the neck of Orestes, who interrogated the eunuch Chrysaphius, as he stood beside the throne, whether he recognised the evidence of his guilt. But the office of reproof was reserved for the superior dignity of his colleague Eslaw, who gravely addressed the emperor of the East in the following words: "Theodosius is the son of an illustrious and respectable parent; Attila likewise is descended from a noble race; and he has supported, by his actions, the dignity which he inherited from his father Mundzuk. But Theodosius has forfeited his paternal honours, and, by consenting to pay tribute, has degraded himself to the condition of a slave. It is, therefore, just that he should reverence the man whom fortune and merit have placed above him; instead of attempting, like a wicked slave, clandestinely to conspire against his master."

The son of Arcadius, who was accustomed only to the voice of flattery, heard with astonishment the severe language of truth; he blushed and trembled; nor did he presume directly to refuse the head of Chrysaphius, which Eslaw and Orestes were instructed to demand. A solemn embassy, armed with full powers and magnificent gifts, was hastily sent to deprecate the wrath of Attila; and his pride was gratified by the choice of Nomius and Anatolius, two ministers of consular or patrician rank, of whom the one was great treasurer, and the other was master-general of the armies of the East. He condescended to meet these ambassadors on the banks of the river Drenco; and though he at first affected a stern and haughty demeanour, his anger was insensibly mollified by their eloquence and liberality. He condescended to pardon the emperor, the eunuch, and the interpreter; bound

himself by an oath to observe the conditions of peace; released a great number of captives; abandoned the fugitives and deserters to their fate; and resigned a large territory to the south of the Danube, which he had already exhausted of its wealth and inhabitants. But this treaty was purchased at an expense which might have supported a vigorous and successful war; and the subjects of Theodosius were compelled to redeem the safety of a worthless favourite by oppressive taxes, which they would more cheerfully have paid for his destruction.

The emperor Theodosius did not long survive the most humiliating circumstance of an inglorious life. As he was riding or hunting in the neighbourhood of Constantinople, he was thrown from his horse into the river Lycus; his spine was injured by the fall; and he expired some days afterwards, in the fiftieth year of his age, and the forty-third of his reign. His sister Pulcheria, whose authority had been controlled both in civil and ecclesiastical affairs by the pernicious influence of the eunuchs, was unanimously proclaimed empress of the East; and the Romans, for the first time, submitted to a female reign. No sooner had Pulcheria ascended the throne, than she indulged her own and the public resentment by an act of popular justice. Without any legal trial, the eunuch Chrysaphius was executed before the gates of the city; and the immense riches which had been accumulated by the rapacious favourite served only to hasten and to justify his punishment.

## SUCCESSORS OF THEODOSIUS

Amidst the general acclamation of the clergy and people, the empress did not forget the prejudice and disadvantage to which her sex was exposed; and she wisely resolved to prevent their murmurs by the choice of a colleague who would always respect the superior rank and virgin chastity of his wife. She gave her hand to Marcian, a senator, about sixty years of age; and the nominal husband of Pulcheria was solemnly invested with the imperial purple. The zeal which he displayed for the orthodox creed, as it was established by the council of Chalcedon, would alone have inspired the grateful eloquence of the Catholics. But the behaviour of Marcian in a private life, and afterwards on the throne, may support a more rational belief that he was qualified to restore and invigorate an empire, which had been almost dissolved by the successive weakness of two hereditary monarchs.

He was born in Thrace, and educated to the profession of arms; but Marcian's youth had been severely exercised by poverty and misfortune, since his only resource, when he first arrived at Constantinople, consisted in two hundred pieces of gold, which he had borrowed of a friend. He passed nineteen years in the domestic and military service of Aspar and his son Ardaburius; followed those powerful generals to the Persian and African wars; and obtained, by their influence, the honourable rank of tribune and senator. His mild disposition and useful talents, without alarming the jealousy, recommended Marcian to the esteem and favour of his patrons; he had seen, perhaps he had felt, the abuses of a venal and oppressive administration, and his own example gave weight and energy to the laws which he promulgated for the reformation of manners.

After Pulcheria's death, he gave his people the example of the religious worship that was due to the memory of the imperial saint. Attentive to the prosperity of his own dominions, Marcian seemed to behold with indifference the misfortunes of Rome; and the obstinate refusal of a brave and active

prince to draw his sword against the Vandals was ascribed to a secret promise, which had formerly been exacted from him when he was a captive in the power of Genseric.

The death of Marcian, after a reign of seven years, would have exposed the East to the danger of a popular election, if the superior weight of a single family had not been able to incline the balance in favour of the candidate whose interest they supported. The patrician Aspar might have placed the diadem on his own head, if he would have subscribed the Nicene Creed. During three generations, the armies of the East were successively commanded by his father, by himself, and by his son Ardaburius; his barbarian guards formed a military force that overawed the palace and the capital; and the liberal distribution of his immense treasures rendered Aspar as popular as he was powerful. He recommended the obscure name of Leo of Thrace, a military tribune and the principal steward of his household. His nomination was unanimously ratified by the senate; and the servant of Aspar received the imperial crown from the hands of the patriarch or bishop, who was permitted to express, by this unusual ceremony, the suffrage of the Deity (457).

This emperor, the first of the name of Leo, has been distinguished by the title of "the great" from a succession of princes, who gradually fixed, in the opinion of the Greeks, a very humble standard of heroic or at least of royal perfection. Yet the temperate firmness with which Leo resisted the oppression of his benefactor showed that he was conscious of his duty and of his prerogative. When Leo had delivered himself from that ignominious servitude, he listened to the complaints of the Italians; resolved to extirpate the tyranny of the Vandals, and declared his alliance with Marcian's son-in-law Anthemius, whom he solemnly invested with the diadem and purple of the West.

In all his public declarations the emperor Leo assumes the authority and professes the affection of a father, for his son Anthemius with whom he had divided the administration of the universe. The situation and perhaps the character of Leo dissuaded him from exposing his person to the toils and dangers of an African war. But the powers of the Eastern Empire were strenuously exerted to deliver Italy and the Mediterranean from the Vandals; and Genseric, who had so long oppressed both the land and sea, was threatened from every side with a formidable invasion. The campaign was opened by a bold and successful enterprise of the prefect Heraclius. The expense of the naval armament, which Leo sent against the Vandals, has been distinctly ascertained; and the curious and instructive account displays the wealth of the declining empire. The royal demesnes, or private patrimony of the prince, supplied seventeen thousand pounds of gold; forty-seven thousand pounds of gold and seven hundred thousand of silver were levied and paid into the treasury by the prætorian prefects. But the cities were reduced to extreme poverty; and the diligent calculation of fines and forfeitures, as a valuable object of the revenue, does not suggest the idea of a just or merciful administration.

The whole expense, by whatsoever means it was defrayed, of the African campaign amounted to the sum of 130,000 pounds of gold [about £5,200,000 sterling], at a time when the value of money appears, from the comparative price of corn, to have been somewhat higher than in the present age. The fleet that sailed from Constantinople to Carthage consisted of 1113 ships, and the number of soldiers and mariners exceeded 100,000 men. Basiliscus, the brother of the empress Verina, was entrusted with this

important command. His sister, the wife of Leo, had exaggerated the merit of his former exploits against the Scythians. But the discovery of his guilt, or incapacity, was reserved for the African War; and his friends could only save his military reputation by asserting that he had conspired with Aspar to spare Genseric, and to betray the last hope of the Western Empire.

He returned to Constantinople with the loss of more than half of his fleet and army, and sheltered his guilty head in the sanctuary of St. Sophia, till his sister, by her tears and entreaties, could obtain his pardon from the indignant emperor. Leo confirmed and dishonoured his reign by the perfidious murder of Aspar and his sons, who too rigorously exacted the debt of gratitude and obedience. The inheritance of Leo and of the East was peaceably devolved on his infant grandson, Leo II, the son of his daughter Ariadne; and her Isaurian husband, the fortunate Trascalisseus, exchanged that barbarous sound for the Grecian appellation of Zeno. After the decease of the elder Leo, he approached with unnatural respect the throne of his son, humbly received as a gift the second rank in the empire, and soon excited the public suspicion on the sudden and premature death of his young colleague, whose life could no longer promote the success of his ambition. But the palace of Constantinople was ruled by female influence, and agitated by female passions; and Verina, the widow of Leo, claiming his empire as her own, pronounced a sentence of deposition against the worthless and ungrateful servant on whom she alone had bestowed the sceptre of the East.

As soon as she sounded a revolt in the ears of Zeno, he fled with precipitation into the mountains of Isauria, and her brother Basiliscus, already infamous by his African expedition, was unanimously proclaimed by the servile senate. But the reign of the usurper was short and turbulent.

Basiliscus presumed to assassinate the lover of his sister; he dared to offend the lover of his wife, the vain and insolent Harmatius, who, in the midst of Asiatic luxury, affected the dress, the demeanour, and the surname of Achilles. By the conspiracy of the malcontents, Zeno was recalled from exile; and the armies, the capital, the person of Basiliscus, were betrayed; and his whole family was condemned to the long agony of cold and hunger by the inhuman conqueror who wanted courage to encounter or to forgive his enemies. [It was after Zeno's return to the throne that Theodoric, the Ostrogothic king, left Illyricum with his people to invade Italy (488). This event will be fully described in Chapter I of the "Western Empire."]

The haughty spirit of Verina was still incapable of submission or repose. She provoked the enmity of a favourite general, embraced his cause as soon as he was disgraced, created a new emperor in Syria and Egypt, raised an army of seventy thousand men, and persisted to the last moment of her life in a fruitless rebellion, which, according to the fashion of the age, had been predicted by Christian hermits and pagan magicians. While the East was afflicted by the passions of Verina, her daughter Ariadne was distinguished by the female virtues of mildness and fidelity; she followed her husband in his exile, and after his restoration she implored his clemency in favour of her mother. On the decease of Zeno, Ariadne, the daughter, the mother, and the widow of an emperor, gave her hand and the imperial title to Anastasius, an aged domestic of the palace, who survived his elevation above twenty-seven years, and whose character is attested by the acclamation of the people: "Reign as you have lived!" *b*

Anastasius' accession was not undisputed. Zeno's brother Longinus claimed the throne and with his brother Isaurians fought for it. A five years' war beginning in 491 was the result. Constantinople furnished the

scene for several bloody riots, especially when, after a decisive victory of the troops at Colyæum in 493, Anastasius issued an edict expelling the Isaurians from the capital. The adherents of the banished nation kept up desultory fighting until in 496 Longinus and his brother were taken. The Isaurian War was the temporary ruin of Asia Minor, and the Persian monarch Kobad found it no difficult task to seize Martyropolis, Amida, and other Armenian strongholds in 503. The cause of this hostile act is a matter of dispute; it may have been that the emperor refused a payment promised by Leo, or Anastasius may have declined to grant Kobad a loan he wished to raise. The consequence of this war might have been most serious for the empire had not the Huns invaded Persia at this critical moment. Kobad was now anxious to sue for peace, the more so since the new Roman general Celer was fast undoing the mistakes of his predecessor, Hypatius. The treaty was signed in 505. The next few years are marked chiefly with the revolt of Vitalian, the Goth. In 514 he attempted to seize the throne, but Anastasius brought him to terms with the office of magister militum of Thrace, and a present of money.[a]

## JUSTIN I

Justin I is said to have been an illiterate Illyrian peasant, who, with two other peasants of the same village, deserted for the profession of arms the more useful employment of husbandmen or shepherds. On foot, with a scanty provision of biscuit in their knapsacks, the three youths followed the high road to Constantinople, and were soon enrolled, for their strength and stature, among the guards of the emperor Leo.

Under the two succeeding reigns, the fortunate peasant emerged to wealth and honours; and his escape from some dangers which threatened his life was afterwards ascribed to the guardian angel who watches over the fate of kings. His long and laudable service in the Isaurian and Persian wars would not have preserved from oblivion the name of Justin; yet they might warrant the military promotion which in the course of fifty years he gradually obtained — the rank of tribune, of count, and of general, the dignity of senator, and the command of the guards, who obeyed him as their chief at the important crisis when the emperor Anastasius was removed from the world. The powerful kinsmen, whom he had raised and enriched, were excluded from the throne; and the eunuch Amantius, who reigned in the palace, had secretly resolved to fix the diadem on the head of the most obsequious of his creatures. A liberal donative, to conciliate the suffrage of the guards, was entrusted for that purpose in the hands of their commander. But these weighty arguments were treacherously employed by Justin in his own favour; and as no competitor presumed to appear, the Dacian peasant was invested with the purple, by the unanimous consent of the soldiers, who knew him to be brave and gentle, of the clergy and people, who believed him to be orthodox, and of the provincials, who yielded a blind and implicit submission to the will of the capital.

The elder Justin, as he is distinguished from another emperor of the same family and name, ascended the Byzantine throne at the age of sixty-eight years; and, had he been left to his own guidance, every moment of a nine years' reign must have exposed to his subjects the impropriety of their choice. His ignorance was similar to that of Theodoric; and it is remarkable that in an age not destitute of learning two contemporary monarchs had never been instructed in the knowledge of the alphabet. But the genius of Justin was

far inferior to that of the Gothic king; the experience of a soldier had not qualified him for the government of an empire, and, though personally brave, the consciousness of his own weakness was naturally attended with doubt, distrust, and political apprehension. But the official business of the state was diligently and faithfully transacted by the quæstor Proclus, and the aged emperor adopted the talents and ambition of his nephew Justinian, an aspiring youth whom his uncle had drawn from the rustic solitude of Dacia, and educated at Constantinople, as the heir of his private fortune and at length of the Eastern Empire.

Since the eunuch Amantius had been defrauded of his money, it became necessary to deprive him of his life. The task was easily accomplished by the charge of a real or fictitious conspiracy; and the judges were informed, as an accumulation of guilt, that he was secretly addicted to the Manichæan heresy. Amantius lost his head; three of his companions, the first domestics of the palace, were punished either with death or exile; and their unfortunate candidate for the purple was cast into a deep dungeon, overwhelmed with stones, and ignominiously thrown, without burial, into the sea.

The ruin of Vitalian was a work of more difficulty and danger. That Gothic chief had rendered himself popular by the civil war which he boldly waged against Anastasius for the defence of the orthodox faith, and, after the conclusion of an advantageous treaty, he still remained in the neighbourhood of Constantinople, at the head of a formidable and victorious army of barbarians. By the frail security of oaths, he was tempted to relinquish this advantageous situation, and to trust his person within the walls of a city whose inhabitants, particularly the blue faction, were artfully incensed against him by the remembrance even of his pious hostilities. The emperor and his nephew embraced him as the faithful and worthy champion of the church and state, and gratefully adorned their favourite with the titles of consul general; but in the seventh month of his consulship, Vitalian was stabbed with seventeen wounds at the royal banquet; and Justinian, who inherited the spoil, was accused as the assassin of a spiritual brother, to whom he had recently pledged his faith in the participation of the Christian mysteries.

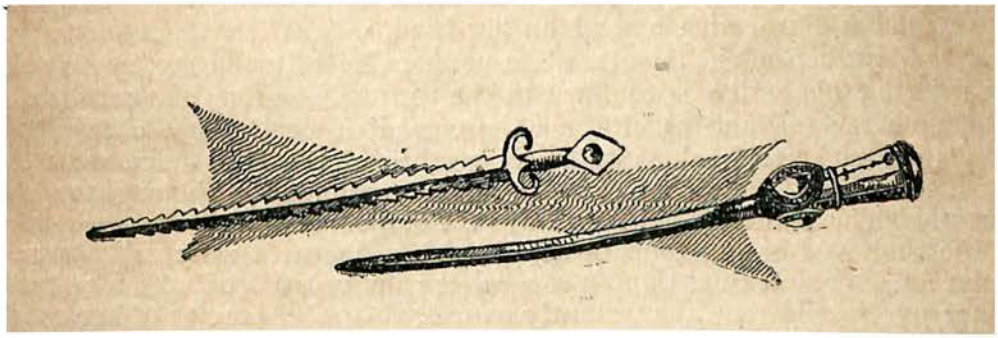
After the fall of his rival, he was promoted, without any claim of military service, to the office of master-general of the eastern armies, whom it was his duty to lead into the field against the public enemy. But, in the pursuit of fame, Justinian might have lost his present dominion over the age and weakness of his uncle; and instead of acquiring by Scythian or Persian trophies the applause of his countrymen, the prudent warrior solicited their favour in the churches, the circus, and the senate of Constantinople. The Catholics were attached to the nephew of Justin, who, between the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies, trod the narrow path of inflexible and intolerant orthodoxy.

In the first days of the new reign, he prompted and gratified the popular enthusiasm against the memory of the deceased emperor. After a schism of thirty-four years, he reconciled the proud and angry spirit of the Roman pontiff, and spread among the Latins a favourable report of his pious respect for the apostolic see. The thrones of the East were filled with Catholic bishops devoted to his interests, the clergy and the monks were gained by his liberality, and the people were taught to pray for their future sovereign, the hope and pillar of the true religion. The magnificence of Justinian was displayed in the superior pomp of his public spectacles, an object not less sacred and important in the eyes of the multitude than the creed of

[527 A.D.]
Nicæa or Chalcedon; the expense of his consulship was esteemed at 288,000 pieces of gold; twenty lions and thirty leopards were produced at the same time in the amphitheatre, and a numerous train of horses, with their rich trappings, was bestowed as an extraordinary gift on the victorious charioteers of the circus.

While he indulged the people of Constantinople, and received the addresses of foreign kings, the nephew of Justin assiduously cultivated the friendship of the senate. That venerable name seemed to qualify its members to declare the sense of the nation, and to regulate the succession of the imperial throne; the feeble Anastasius had permitted the vigour of government to degenerate into the form or substance of an aristocracy; and the military officers who had obtained the senatorial rank were followed by their domestic guards, a band of veterans whose arms or acclamations might fix in a tumultuous moment the diadem of the East. The treasures of the state were lavished to procure the voices of the senators; and their unanimous wish, that he would be pleased to adopt Justinian for his colleague, was communicated to the emperor. But this request, which too clearly admonished him of his approaching end, was unwelcome to the jealous temper of an aged monarch, desirous to retain the power which he was incapable of exercising; and Justin, holding his purple with both his hands, advised them to prefer, since an election was so profitable, some older candidate.

Notwithstanding this reproach, the senate proceeded to decorate Justinian with the royal epithet of *nobilissimus;* and their decree was ratified by the affection or the fears of his uncle. After some time the languor of mind and body to which he was reduced by an incurable wound in his thigh, indispensably required the aid of a guardian. He summoned the patriarch and senators; and in their presence solemnly placed the diadem on the head of his nephew, who was conducted from the palace to the circus, and saluted by the loud and joyful applause of the people. The life of Justin was prolonged about four months, but from the instant of this ceremony he was considered as dead to the empire, which acknowledged Justinian, in the forty-fifth year of his age, for the lawful sovereign of the East.[b]



# CHAPTER III. JUSTINIAN AND THEODORA

[525–548 A.D.]

In the exercise of supreme power, the first act of Justinian was to divide it with the woman whom he loved, the famous Theodora, whose strange elevation cannot be applauded as the triumph of female virtue. Under the reign of Anastasius, the care of the wild beasts maintained by the green faction at Constantinople was entrusted to Acacius, a native of the isle of Cyprus, who, from his employment, was surnamed the master of the bears. This honourable office was given after his death to another candidate, notwithstanding the diligence of his widow, who had already provided a husband and a successor.

Acacius had left three daughters, Comito, Theodora, and Anastasia, the eldest of whom did not then exceed the age of seven years. On a solemn festival, these helpless orphans were sent by their distressed and indignant mother, in the garb of suppliants, into the midst of the theatre; the green faction received them with contempt, the blues with compassion; and this difference, which sunk deep into the mind of Theodora, was felt long afterwards in the administration of the empire. As they improved in age and beauty, the three sisters were successively devoted to the public and private pleasures of the Byzantine people; and Theodora, after following Comito on the stage, in the dress of a slave, with a stool on her head, was at length permitted to exercise her independent talents. She neither danced, nor sang, nor played on the flute; her skill was confined to the pantomime arts; she excelled in buffoon characters, and as often as the comedian swelled her cheeks and complained with a ridiculous tone and gesture of the blows that were inflicted, the whole theatre of Constantinople resounded with laughter and applause. The beauty of Theodora was the subject of more flattering praise and the source of more exquisite delight. Her features were delicate and regular; her complexion, though somewhat pale, was tinged with a natural colour; every sensation was instantly expressed by the vivacity of her eyes; her easy motions displayed the graces of a small but elegant figure.

[The question of the beauty of Theodora has been a subject for much discussion. "A contemporary," says Bury,[1] "said it was impossible for mere man to describe her comeliness in words, or to imitate it by art"; but he adds that we cannot judge how far this remark was due to the enthusiasm of adulation. He admits, however, that she was doubtless beautiful, although somewhat short in stature and of pale complexion.]

In the most abject state of her fortune and reputation, some vision, either of sleep or of fancy, had whispered to Theodora the pleasing assurance that she was destined to become the spouse of a potent monarch. Conscious of

[525-527 A.D.]

her approaching greatness, she returned from Paphlagonia to Constantinople; assumed, like a skilful actress, a more decent character; relieved her poverty by the laudable industry of spinning wool; and affected a life of chastity and solitude in a small house, which she afterwards changed into a magnificent temple. Her beauty, assisted by art or accident, soon attracted, captivated, and fixed the patrician Justinian, who already reigned with absolute sway under the name of his uncle. Perhaps she contrived to enhance the value of a gift which she had so often lavished on the meanest of mankind; perhaps she inflamed, at first by modest delays and at last by sensual allurements, the desires of a lover who from nature or devotion was addicted to long vigils and abstemious diet. When his first transports had subsided, she still maintained the same ascendancy over his mind, by the more solid merit of temper and understanding. Justinian delighted to ennoble and enrich the object of his affection; the treasures of the East were poured at her feet, and the nephew of Justin was determined, perhaps by religious scruples, to bestow on his concubine the sacred and legal character of a wife. But the laws of Rome expressly prohibited the marriage of a senator with any female who had been dishonoured by a servile origin or theatrical profession; the empress, a barbarian of rustic manners but of irreproachable virtue, refused to accept a prostitute for her niece.

These obstacles were removed by the inflexible constancy of Justinian. He patiently expected the death of the empress; he despised the tears of his mother, who soon sank under the weight of her affliction; and a law was promulgated in the name of the emperor Justin, which abolished the rigid jurisprudence of antiquity. A glorious repentance (the words of the edict) was left open for the unhappy females who had prostituted their persons on the theatre, and they were permitted to contract a legal union with the most illustrious of the Romans. This indulgence was speedily followed by the solemn nuptials of Justinian and Theodora; her dignity was gradually exalted with that of her lover; and, as soon as Justin had invested his nephew with the purple, the patriarch of Constantinople placed the diadem on the heads of the emperor and empress of the East. But the usual honours which the severity of Roman manners had allowed to the wives of princes could not satisfy either the ambition of Theodora or the fondness of Justinian. He seated her on the throne as an equal and independent colleague in the sovereignty of the empire, and an oath of allegiance was imposed on the governors of the provinces in the joint names of Justinian and Theodora. The eastern world fell prostrate before the genius and fortune of the daughter of Acacius.

Her private hours were devoted to the prudent as well as grateful care of her beauty, the luxury of the bath and table, and the long slumber of the evening and the morning. Her secret apartments were occupied by the favourite women and eunuchs, whose interests and passions she indulged at the expense of justice; the most illustrious personages of the state were crowded into a dark and sultry antechamber, and when at last, after tedious attendance, they were admitted to kiss the feet of Theodora, they experienced, as her humour might suggest, the silent arrogance of an empress or the capricious levity of a comedian. Her rapacious avarice to accumulate an immense treasure may be excused by the apprehension of her husband's death, which could leave no alternative between ruin and the throne; and fear as well as ambition might exasperate Theodora against two generals who, during a malady of the emperor, had rashly declared that they were not disposed to acquiesce in the choice of the capital.

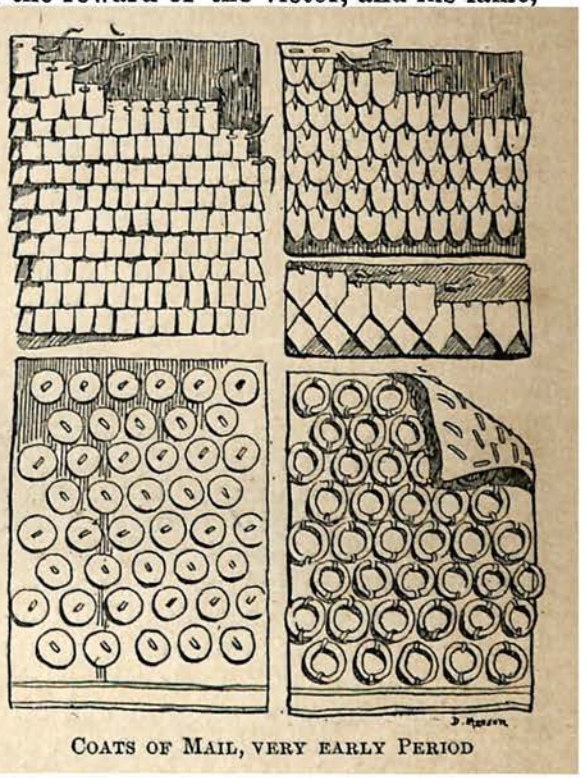
But the reproach of cruelty, so repugnant even to her softer vices, has left an indelible stain on the memory of Theodora. Her numerous spies observed, and zealously reported, every action, or word, or look injurious to their royal mistress. Whomsoever they accused were cast into her peculiar prisons, inaccessible to the inquiries of justice; and it was rumoured that the torture of the rack, or scourge, had been inflicted in the presence of a female tyrant, insensible to the voice of prayer or of pity. Some of these unhappy victims perished in deep unwholesome dungeons, while others were permitted, after the loss of their limbs, their reason, or their fortune, to appear in the world the living monuments of her vengeance, which was commonly extended to the children of those whom she had suspected or injured. The senator or bishop whose death or exile Theodora had pronounced, was delivered to a trusty messenger, and his diligence was quickened by a message from her own mouth: "If you fail in the execution of my commands, I swear by Him who liveth forever, that your skin shall be flayed from your body."

If the creed of Theodora had not been tainted with heresy, her exemplary devotion might have atoned, in the opinion of her contemporaries, for pride, avarice, and cruelty. But if she employed her influence to assuage the intolerant fury of the emperor, the present age will allow some merit to her religion, and much indulgence to her speculative errors. The name of Theodora was introduced, with equal honour, in all the pious and charitable foundations of Justinian; and the most benevolent institution of his reign may be ascribed to the sympathy of the empress for her less fortunate sisters. A palace, on the Asiatic side of the Bosporus, was converted into a stately and spacious monastery, and a liberal maintenance was assigned to five hundred women, who had been collected from the streets and brothels of Constantinople. In this safe and holy retreat they were devoted to perpetual confinement; and the despair of some, who threw themselves headlong into the sea, was lost in the gratitude of the penitents, who had been delivered from sin and misery by their generous benefactress. The prudence of Theodora is celebrated by Justinian himself; and his laws are attributed to the sage counsels of his most reverend wife, whom he had received as the gift of the Deity. Her courage was displayed amidst the tumult of the people and the terrors of the court. Her chastity, from the moment of her union with Justinian, is founded on the silence of her implacable enemies.

The wishes and prayers of Theodora could never obtain the blessing of a lawful son, and she buried an infant daughter, the sole offspring of her marriage. Notwithstanding this disappointment, her dominion was permanent and absolute; she preserved, by art or merit, the affections of Justinian; and their seeming dissensions were always fatal to the courtiers who believed them to be sincere. Perhaps her health had been impaired by the licentiousness of her youth; but it was always delicate, and she was directed by her physicians to use the Pythian warm baths. In this journey, the empress was followed by the prætorian prefect, the great treasurer, several counts and patricians, and a splendid train of four thousand attendants. The highways were repaired at her approach, a palace was erected for her reception; and as she passed through Bithynia, she distributed liberal alms to the churches, the monasteries, and the hospitals, that they might implore heaven for the restoration of her health. At length, in the twenty-fourth year of her marriage, and the twenty-second of her reign, she was consumed by a cancer; and the irreparable loss was deplored by her husband, who, in the room of a theatrical prostitute, might have selected the purest and most noble virgin of the East.

### THE FACTIONS OF THE CIRCUS

A material difference may be observed in the games of antiquity; the most eminent of the Greeks were actors, the Romans were merely spectators. The Olympic stadium was open to wealth, merit, and ambition; and if the candidates could depend on their personal skill and activity they might pursue the footsteps of Diomede and Menelaus, and conduct their own horses in the rapid career. Ten, twenty, forty chariots were allowed to start at the same instant; a crown of leaves was the reward of the victor, and his fame, with that of his family and country, was chanted in lyric strains more durable than monuments of brass and marble. But a senator, or even a citizen, conscious of his dignity, would have blushed to expose his person or his horses in the circus of Rome. The games were exhibited at the expense of the republic, the magistrates, or the emperors; but the reins were abandoned to servile hands; and if the profits of a favourite charioteer sometimes exceeded those of an advocate, they must be considered as the effects of popular extravagance and the high wages of a disgraceful profession. The race, in its first institution, was a simple contest of two chariots, whose drivers were distinguished by white and red liveries; two additional colours, a light green and a cerulean blue, were afterwards introduced; and as the races were repeated twenty-five times, one hundred chariots contributed in the same day to the pomp of the circus. The four factions soon acquired a legal establishment, and a mysterious origin, and their fanciful colours were derived from the various appearances of nature in the four seasons of the year; the red dog-star of summer, the snows of winter, the deep shades of autumn, and the cheerful verdure of the spring.



COATS OF MAIL, VERY EARLY PERIOD

Another interpretation preferred the elements to the seasons, and the struggle of the green and blue was supposed to represent the conflict of the earth and sea. Their respective victories announced either a plentiful harvest or a prosperous navigation, and the hostility of the husbandmen and mariners was somewhat less absurd than the blind ardour of the Roman people, who devoted their lives and fortunes to the colour which they had espoused. Such folly was disdained and indulged by the wisest princes; but the names of Caligula, Nero, Vitellius, Verus, Commodus, Caracalla, and Elagabalus were enrolled in the blue or green factions of the circus; they frequented their stables, applauded their favourites, chastised their antagonists, and deserved the esteem of the populace by the natural or affected imitation of their manners. The bloody and tumultuous contest continued to disturb the public festivity, till the last age of the spectacles of Rome; and Theodoric, from a motive of justice or affection, interposed his

authority to protect the greens against the violence of a consul and a patrician, who were passionately addicted to the blue faction of the circus.

Constantinople adopted the follies, though not the virtues, of ancient Rome; and the same factions which had agitated the circus raged with redoubled fury in the hippodrome. Under the reign of Anastasius, this popular frenzy was inflamed by religious zeal; and the greens, who had treacherously concealed stones and daggers under baskets of fruit, massacred, at a solemn festival, three thousand of their blue adversaries. From the capital this pestilence was diffused into the provinces and cities of the East, and the sportive distinction of two colours produced two strong and irreconcilable factions, which shook the foundations of a feeble government. The popular dissensions, founded on the most serious interest or holy pretence, have scarcely equalled the obstinacy of this wanton discord, which invaded the peace of families, divided friends and brothers, and tempted the female sex, though seldom seen in the circus, to espouse the inclinations of their lovers or to contradict the wishes of their husbands.

Every law, either human or divine, was trampled under foot, and as long as the party was successful, its deluded followers appeared careless of private distress or public calamity. The license, without the freedom, of democracy was revived at Antioch and Constantinople, and the support of a faction became necessary to every candidate for civil or ecclesiastical honours. A secret attachment to the family or sect of Anastasius was imputed to the greens; the blues were zealously devoted to the cause of orthodoxy and Justinian, and their grateful patron protected, above five years, the disorders of a faction whose seasonable tumults overawed the palace, the senate, and the capitals of the East. Insolent with royal favour, the blues affected to strike terror by a peculiar and barbaric dress — the long hair of the Huns, their close sleeves and ample garments, a lofty step, and a sonorous voice.

In the day they concealed their two-edged poniards, but in the night they boldly assembled in arms, and in numerous bands, prepared for every act of violence and rapine. Their adversaries of the green faction, or even inoffensive citizens, were stripped and often murdered by these nocturnal robbers, and it became dangerous to wear any gold buttons or girdles, or to appear at a late hour in the streets of a peaceful capital. A daring spirit, rising with impunity, proceeded to violate the safeguard of private houses; and fire was employed to facilitate the attack or to conceal the crimes of those factious rioters. No place was safe or sacred from their depredations; to gratify either avarice or revenge, they profusely spilt the blood of the innocent; churches and altars were polluted by atrocious murders; and it was the boast of the assassins that their dexterity could always inflict a mortal wound with a single stroke of their dagger.

The dissolute youth of Constantinople adopted the blue livery of disorder; the laws were silent, and the bonds of society were relaxed; creditors were compelled to resign their obligations, judges to reverse their sentence, masters to enfranchise their slaves, fathers to supply the extravagance of their children; noble matrons were prostituted to the lust of their servants; beautiful boys were torn from the arms of their parents; and wives, unless they preferred a voluntary death, were ravished in the presence of their husbands. The despair of the greens, who were persecuted by their enemies and deserted by the magistrate, assumed the privilege of defence, perhaps of retaliation; but those who survived the combat were dragged to execution, and the unhappy fugitives, escaping to woods and caverns, preyed without mercy on the society from whence they were expelled. Those ministers of

[532 A.D.]

justice who had courage to punish the crimes and to brave the resentment of the blues, became the victims of their indiscreet zeal; a prefect of Constantinople fled for refuge to the holy sepulchre; a count of the East was ignominiously whipped, and a governor of Cilicia was hanged, by the order of Theodora, on the tomb of two assassins whom he had condemned for the murder of his groom and a daring attack upon his own life.

An aspiring candidate may be tempted to build his greatness on the public confusion, but it is the interest as well as duty of a sovereign to maintain the authority of the laws. The first edict of Justinian, which was often repeated and sometimes executed, announced his firm resolution to support the innocent, and to chastise the guilty, of every denomination and colour. Yet the balance of justice was still inclined in favour of the blue faction, by the secret affection, the habits, and the fears of the emperor; his equity, after an apparent struggle, submitted, without reluctance, to the implacable passions of Theodora, and the empress never forgot, or forgave, the injuries of the comedian. At the accession of the younger Justin, the proclamation of equal and rigorous justice indirectly condemned the partiality of the former reigns. "Ye blues, Justinian is no more! ye greens, he is still alive!"

A sedition, which almost laid Constantinople in ashes, was excited by the mutual hatred and momentary reconciliation of the two factions. In the fifth year of his reign, Justinian celebrated the festival of the ides of January: the games were incessantly disturbed by the clamorous discontent of the greens; till the twenty-second race, the emperor maintained his silent gravity; at length yielding to his impatience, he condescended to hold, in abrupt sentences and by the voice of a crier, the most singular dialogue that ever passed between a prince and his subjects.

The first complaints were respectful and modest; they accused the subordinate ministers of oppression, and proclaimed their wishes for the long life and victory of the emperor. "Be patient and attentive, ye insolent railers," exclaimed Justinian; "be mute, ye Jews, Samaritans, and Manichæans!" The greens still attempt to awaken his compassion. "We are poor, we are innocent, we are injured, we dare not pass through the streets: a general persecution is exercised against our name and colour. Let us die, O emperor! but let us die by your command, and for your service!" But the repetition of partial and passionate invectives degraded, in their eyes, the majesty of the purple; they renounced allegiance to the prince who refused justice to his people; lamented that the father of Justinian had been born; and branded his son with the opprobrious names of homicide, an ass, and a perjured tyrant. "Do you despise your lives?" cried the indignant monarch. The blues rose with fury from their seats; their hostile clamours thundered in the hippodrome; and their adversaries, deserting the unequal contest, spread terror and despair through the streets of Constantinople.

A military force, which had been despatched to the aid of the civil magistrate, was fiercely encountered by an armed multitude, whose numbers and boldness continually increased; and the Heruli, the wildest barbarians in the service of the empire, overturned the priests and their relics, which, from a pious motive, had been rashly interposed to separate the bloody conflict. The tumult was exasperated by this sacrilege; the people fought with enthusiasm in the cause of God; the women from the roofs and windows showered stones on the heads of the soldiers, who darted firebrands against the houses; and the various flames, which had been kindled by the hands of citizens and strangers, spread without control over the face of the city. The conflagration involved the cathedral of St. Sophia, the baths of Zeuxippus, a part of

the palace from the first entrance to the altar of Mars, and the long portico from the palace to the forum of Constantine; a large hospital, with the sick patients, was consumed; many churches and stately edifices were destroyed, and an immense treasure of gold and silver was either melted or lost. From such scenes of horror and distress, the wise and wealthy citizens escaped over the Bosporus to the Asiatic side; and, during five days, Constantinople was abandoned to the factions, whose watchword, *Nika* (vanquish), has given a name to this memorable sedition.

As long as the factions were divided, the triumphant blues and desponding greens appeared to behold with the same indifference the disorders of the state. They agreed to censure the corrupt management of justice and the finance; and the two responsible ministers, the artful Tribonian and the rapacious Joannes of Cappadocia, were loudly arraigned as the authors of the public misery. The peaceful murmurs of the people would have been disregarded; they were heard with respect when the city was in flames; the quæstor and the prefect were instantly removed, and their offices were filled by two senators of blameless integrity. After this popular concession, Justinian proceeded to the hippodrome to confess his own errors, and to accept the repentance of his grateful subjects; but they distrusted his assurances, though solemnly pronounced in the presence of the holy Gospels; and the emperor, alarmed by their distrust, retreated with precipitation to the strong fortress of the palace.

The obstinacy of the tumult was now imputed to a secret and ambitious conspiracy, and a suspicion was entertained that the insurgents, more especially the green faction, had been supplied with arms and money by Hypatius and Pompeius, two patricians, who could neither forget with honour nor remember with safety, that they were the nephews of the emperor Anastasius. Capriciously trusted, disgraced, and pardoned by the jealous levity of the monarch, they had appeared as loyal servants before the throne; and during five days of the tumult they were detained as important hostages; till at length, the fears of Justinian prevailing over his prudence, he viewed the two brothers in the light of spies, perhaps of assassins, and sternly commanded them to depart from the palace.

After a fruitless representation that obedience might lead to involuntary treason, they retired to their houses, and in the morning of the sixth day Hypatius was surrounded and seized by the people, who, regardless of his virtuous resistance and the tears of his wife, transported their favourite to the forum of Constantine, and, instead of a diadem, placed a rich collar on his head. If the usurper, who afterwards pleaded the merit of his delay, had complied with the advice of his senate and urged the fury of the multitude, their first irresistible effort might have oppressed or expelled his trembling competitor. The Byzantine palace enjoyed a free communication with the sea; vessels lay ready at the garden stairs; and a secret resolution was already formed to convey the emperor with his family and treasures to a safe retreat, at some distance from the capital.

Justinian was lost, if the prostitute whom he raised from the theatre had not renounced the timidity as well as the virtues of her sex. In the midst of a council, where Belisarius was present, Theodora alone displayed the spirit of a hero; and she alone, without apprehending his future hatred, could save the emperor from the imminent danger and his unworthy fears. "If flight," said the consort of Justinian, "were the only means of safety, yet I should disdain to fly. Death is the condition of our birth; but they who have reigned should never survive the loss of dignity and dominion.

[532 A.D.]

I implore heaven that I may never be seen, not a day, without my diadem and purple; that I may no longer behold the light, when I cease to be saluted with the name of queen. If you resolve, O Cæsar! to fly, you have treasures; behold the sea, you have ships; but tremble lest the desire of life should expose you to wretched exile and ignominious death. For my own part, I adhere to the maxim of antiquity, that the throne is a glorious sepulchre."

The firmness of a woman restored the courage to deliberate and act, and courage soon discovers the resources of the most desperate situation. It was an easy and a decisive measure to revive the animosity of the factions. The blues were astonished at their own guilt and folly, that a trifling injury should provoke them to conspire with their implacable enemies against a gracious and liberal benefactor; they again proclaimed the majesty of Justinian, and the greens, with their upstart emperor, were left alone in the hippodrome. The fidelity of the guards was doubtful; but the military force of Justinian consisted in three thousand veterans, who had been trained to valour and discipline in the Persian and Illyrian wars.

A Byzantine Costume

Under the command of Belisarius and Mundus, they silently marched in two divisions from the palace, forced their obscure way through narrow passages, expiring flames, and falling edifices, and burst open at the same moment the two opposite gates of the hippodrome. In this narrow space, the disorderly and affrighted crowd was incapable of resisting on either side a firm and regular attack; the blues signalised the fury of their repentance; and it is computed that above thirty thousand persons were slain in the merciless and promiscuous carnage of the day.[1] Hypatius was dragged from his throne, and conducted with his brother Pompeius to the feet of the emperor; they implored his clemency; but their crime was manifest, their innocence uncertain, and Justinian had been too much terrified to forgive. The next morning the two nephews of Anastasius, with eighteen illustrious accomplices of patrician or consular rank were privately executed by the soldiers; their bodies were thrown into the sea, their palaces razed, and their fortunes confiscated. The hippodrome itself was condemned during several years to a mournful silence; with the restoration of the games the same disorders revived, and the blue and green factions continued to afflict the reign of Justinian, and to disturb the tranquillity of the Eastern Empire, which still embraced the nations beyond the Adriatic and as far as the frontiers of Ethiopia and Persia.

[1] Marcellinus[n] says in general terms: *Innumeris populis in circo trucidatis.* Procopius numbers 30,000 victims; and the 35,000 of Theophanes are swelled to 40,000 by the more recent Zonaras. Such is the usual progress of exaggeration.

## AVARICE AND PROFUSION OF JUSTINIAN

Justinian reigned over sixty-four provinces and 935 cities, his dominions were blessed by nature with the advantages of soil, situation, and climate; and the improvements of human art had been perpetually diffused along the coast of the Mediterranean and the banks of the Nile, from ancient Troy to the Egyptian Thebes. Abraham had been relieved by the well-known plenty of Egypt; the same country, a small and populous tract, was still capable of exporting each year 260,000 quarters of wheat for the use of Constantinople; and the capital of Justinian was supplied with the manufactures of Sidon, fifteen centuries after they had been celebrated in the poems of Homer.

The subjects of Justinian were dissatisfied with the times and with the government. Europe was overrun by the barbarians, and Asia by the monks; the poverty of the West discouraged the trade and manufactures of the East; the produce of labour was consumed by the unprofitable servants of the church, the state, and the army, and a rapid decrease was felt in the fixed and circulating capitals which constitute the national wealth. The public distress had been alleviated by the economy of Anastasius, and that prudent emperor accumulated an immense treasure, while he delivered his people from the most odious or oppressive taxes. His example was neglected, and his treasure was abused, by the nephew of Justin. The riches of Justinian were speedily exhausted by alms and buildings, by ambitious wars, and ignominious treaties. His revenues were found inadequate to his expenses.

Every art was tried to extort from the people the gold and silver which he scattered with a lavish hand from Persia to France; his reign was marked by the vicissitudes, or rather by the combat, of rapaciousness and avarice, of splendour and poverty; he lived with the reputation of hidden treasures, and bequeathed to his successor the payment of his debts. Such a character has been justly accused by the voice of the people and of posterity; but public discontent is credulous, private malice is bold; and a lover of truth will peruse with a suspicious eye the instructive anecdotes of Procopius.[e] The secret historian represents only the vices of Justinian, and those vices are darkened by his malevolent pencil. Ambiguous actions are imputed to the worst motives, error is confounded with guilt, accident with design, and laws with abuses; the partial injustice of a moment is dexterously applied as the general maxim of a reign of thirty-two years. The emperor alone is made responsible for the faults of his officers, the disorders of the times, and the corruption of his subjects; and even the calamities of nature, plagues, earthquakes, and inundations, are imputed to the prince of the demons, who had mischievously assumed the form of Justinian.

After this precaution, we shall briefly relate the anecdotes of avarice and rapine, under the following heads: (1) Justinian was so profuse that he could not be liberal. The civil and military officers, when they were admitted into the service of the palace, obtained a humble rank and a moderate stipend; they ascended by seniority to a station of affluence and repose; the annual pensions, of which the most honourable class was abolished by Justinian, amounted to four hundred thousand pounds; and this domestic economy was deplored by the venal or indigent courtiers as the last outrage on the majesty of the empire. The posts, the salaries of physicians, and the nocturnal illuminations, were objects of more general concern; and the cities might justly complain that he usurped the municipal revenues which had been appropriated to these useful institutions. Even the soldiers were injured; and

such was the decay of military spirit that they were injured with impunity. The emperor refused, at the return of each fifth year, the customary donative of five pieces of gold, reduced his veterans to beg their bread, and suffered unpaid armies to melt away in the wars of Italy and Persia.

(2) The humanity of his predecessors had always remitted, in some auspicious circumstance of their reign, the arrears of public tribute; and they dexterously assumed the merit of resigning those claims which it was impracticable to enforce. "Justinian, in the space of thirty-two years, has never granted a similar indulgence; and many of his subjects have renounced the possession of those lands whose value is insufficient to satisfy the demands of the treasury. To the cities which had suffered by hostile inroads, Anastasius promised a general exemption of seven years; the provinces of Justinian have been ravaged by the Persians and Arabs, the Huns and Slavonians; but his vain and ridiculous dispensation of a single year has been confined to those places which were actually taken by the enemy." Such is the language of the secret historian, who expressly denies that any indulgence was granted to Palestine after the revolt of the Samaritans; a false and odious charge, confuted by the authentic record, which attests a relief of thirteen centenaries of gold (or £52,000 sterling) obtained for that desolate province by the intercession of St. Sabas.

(3) Procopius has not condescended to explain the system of taxation, which fell like a hail-storm upon the land, like a devouring pestilence on its inhabitants; but we should become the accomplices of his malignity, if we imputed to Justinian alone the ancient, though rigorous principle, that a whole district should be condemned to sustain the partial loss of the persons or property of individuals. The *annona*, or supply of corn for the use of the army and capital, was a grievous and arbitrary exaction, which exceeded, perhaps in a tenfold proportion, the ability of the farmer; and his distress was aggravated by the partial injustice of weights and measures, and the expense and labour of distant carriage. In a time of scarcity, an extraordinary requisition was made to the adjacent provinces of Thrace, Bithynia, and Phrygia; but the proprietors, after a wearisome journey and a perilous navigation, received so inadequate a compensation that they would have chosen the alternative of delivering both the corn and price at the doors of their granaries. These precautions might indicate a tender solicitude for the welfare of the capital; yet Constantinople did not escape the rapacious despotism of Justinian. Till his reign, the straits of the Bosporus and Hellespont were open to the freedom of trade, and nothing was prohibited except the exportation of arms for the service of the barbarians. At each of these gates of the city a prætor was stationed, the minister of imperial avarice; heavy customs were imposed on the vessels and their merchandise; the oppression was retaliated on the helpless consumer; the poor were afflicted by the artificial scarcity and exorbitant price of the market; and a people, accustomed to depend on the liberality of their prince, might sometimes complain of the deficiency of water and bread. The aërial tribute, without a name, a law, or a definite object, was an annual gift of £120,000 sterling, which the emperor accepted from his prætorian prefect; and the means of payment were abandoned to the discretion of that powerful magistrate.

(4) Even such a tax was less intolerable than the privilege of monopolies, which checked the fair competition of industry, and, for the sake of a small and dishonest gain, imposed an arbitrary burden on the wants and luxury of the subject. "As soon," says Procopius,[e] "as the exclusive sale of silk was usurped by the imperial treasurer, a whole people, the

manufacturers of Tyre and Berytus, was reduced to extreme misery, and either perished with hunger, or fled to the hostile dominions of Persia." A province might suffer by the decay of its manufactures; but in this example Procopius has partially overlooked the inestimable benefit which the empire received from Justinian's introduction of silk-culture. His addition of one-seventh to the ordinary price of copper money may be interpreted with the same candour; and the alteration, which might be wise, appears to have been innocent; since he neither alloyed the purity nor enhanced the value of the gold coin, the legal measure of public and private payments.

(5) The ample jurisdiction, required by the farmers of the revenue to accomplish their engagements, might be placed in an odious light, as if they had purchased from the emperor the lives and fortunes of their fellow-citizens. And a more direct sale of honours and offices was transacted in the palace, with the permission, or at least with the connivance, of Justinian and Theodora. The claims of merit, even those of favour, were disregarded; and it was almost reasonable to expect that the bold adventurer, who had undertaken the trade of a magistrate, should find a rich compensation for infamy, labour, danger, the debts which he had contracted, and the heavy interest which he paid. A sense of the disgrace and mischief of this venal practice at length awakened the slumbering virtue of Justinian; and he attempted, by the sanction of oaths and penalties, to guard the integrity of his government: but at the end of a year of perjury, his rigorous edict was suspended, and corruption licentiously abused her triumph over the impotence of the laws.

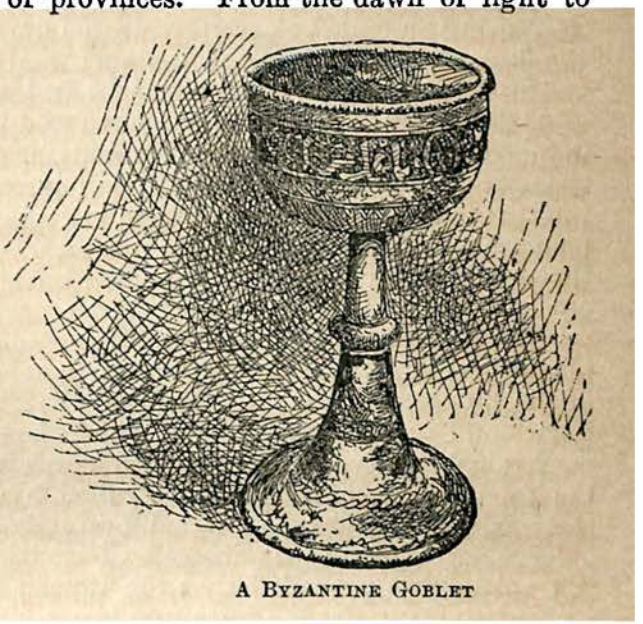
(6) The testament of Eulalius, count of the domestics, declared the emperor his sole heir, on condition, however, that he should discharge his debts and legacies, allow to his three daughters a decent maintenance, and bestow each of them in marriage, with a portion of ten pounds of gold. But the splendid fortune of Eulalius had been consumed by fire; and the inventory of his goods did not exceed the trifling sum of 564 pieces of gold. A similar instance in Grecian history admonished the emperor of the honourable part prescribed for his imitation. He checked the selfish murmurs of the treasury, applauded the confidence of his friend, discharged the legacies and debts, educated the three virgins under the eye of the empress Theodora, and doubled the marriage portion which had satisfied the tenderness of their father. The humanity of a prince (for princes cannot be generous) is entitled to some praise; yet even in this act of virtue we may discover the inveterate custom of supplanting the legal or natural heirs, which Procopius imputes to the reign of Justinian. His charge is supported by eminent names and scandalous examples; neither widows nor orphans were spared; and the art of soliciting, or extorting, or supposing testaments, was beneficially practised by the agents of the palace. This base and mischievous tyranny invades the security of private life; and the monarch who has indulged an appetite for gain, will soon be tempted to anticipate the moment of succession, to interpret wealth as an evidence of guilt, and to proceed from the claim of inheritance to the power of confiscation.

(7) Among the forms of rapine, a philosopher may be permitted to name the conversion of pagan or heretical riches to the use of the faithful; but in the time of Justinian this holy plunder was condemned by the sectaries alone, who became the victims of his orthodox avarice.

Dishonour might be ultimately reflected on the character of Justinian; but much of the guilt, and still more of the profit, was intercepted by the ministers, who were seldom promoted for their virtues, and not always

selected for their talents. The merits of Tribonian the quæstor will hereafter be weighed in the reformation of the Roman law; but the economy of the East was subordinate to the prætorian prefect, and Procopius has justified his anecdotes by the portrait which he exposes in his public history of the notorious vices of Joannes of Cappadocia.

The corruption of his heart was equal to the vigour of his understanding. Although he was suspected of magic and pagan superstition, he appeared insensible to the fear of God or the reproaches of man; and his aspiring fortune was raised on the death of thousands, the poverty of millions, the ruin of cities, and the desolation of provinces. From the dawn of light to the moment of dinner he assiduously laboured to enrich his master and himself at the expense of the Roman world; the remainder of the day was spent in sensual and obscene pleasures, and the silent hours of the night were interrupted by the perpetual dread of the justice of an assassin. His abilities, perhaps his vices, recommended him to the lasting friendship of Justinian; the emperor yielded with reluctance to the fury of the people; his victory was displayed by the immediate restoration of their enemy; and they felt above ten years, under his oppressive administration, that he was stimulated by revenge, rather than instructed by misfortune. Their murmurs served only to fortify the resolution of Justinian; but the prefect, in the insolence of favour, provoked the resentment of Theodora, disdained a power before which every knee was bent, and attempted to sow the seeds of discord between the emperor and his beloved consort.



A BYZANTINE GOBLET

Even Theodora herself was constrained to dissemble, to wait a favourable moment, and by an artful conspiracy, to render Joannes of Cappadocia the accomplice of his own destruction. At a time when Belisarius, unless he had been a hero, must have shown himself a rebel, his wife Antonina, who enjoyed the secret confidence of the empress, communicated his feigned discontent to Euphemia, the daughter of the prefect; the credulous virgin imparted to her father the dangerous project, and Joannes, who might have known the value of oaths and promises, was tempted to accept a nocturnal, and almost treasonable, interview with the wife of Belisarius. An ambuscade of guards and eunuchs had been posted by the command of Theodora; they rushed with drawn swords to seize or to punish the guilty minister; he was saved by the fidelity of his attendants; but, instead of appealing to a gracious sovereign, who had privately warned him of his danger, he pusillanimously fled to the sanctuary of the church.

The favourite of Justinian was sacrificed to conjugal tenderness or domestic tranquillity; the conversion of a prefect into a priest extinguished his ambitious hopes, but the friendship of the emperor alleviated his disgrace, and he retained, in the mild exile of Cyzicus, an ample portion of

his riches. Such imperfect revenge could not satisfy the unrelenting hatred of Theodora; the murder of his old enemy, the bishop of Cyzicus, afforded a decent pretence; and Joannes of Cappadocia, whose actions had deserved a thousand deaths, was at last condemned for a crime of which he was innocent. A great minister, who had been invested with the honours of consul and patrician, was ignominiously scourged like the vilest of malefactors; a tattered cloak was the sole remnant of his fortunes; he was transported in a bark to the place of his banishment at Antinopolis in Upper Egypt, and the prefect of the East begged his bread through the cities which had trembled at his name.

During an exile of seven years, his life was protected and threatened by the ingenious cruelty of Theodora; and when her death permitted the emperor to recall a servant whom he had abandoned with regret, the ambition of Joannes of Cappadocia was reduced to the humble duties of the sacerdotal profession. His successors convinced the subjects of Justinian that the arts of oppression might still be improved by experience and industry; the frauds of a Syrian banker were introduced into the administration of the finances; and the example of the prefect was diligently copied by the quæstor, the public and private treasurer, the governors of provinces, and the principal magistrates of the Eastern Empire.

The edifices of Justinian were cemented with the blood and treasure of his people; but those stately structures appeared to announce the prosperity of the empire, and actually displayed the skill of their architects. Both the theory and practice of the arts, which depend on mathematical science and mechanical power, were cultivated under the patronage of the emperors; the fame of Archimedes was rivalled by Proclus and Anthemius; and if their miracles had been related by intelligent spectators, they might now enlarge the speculations instead of exciting the distrust of philosophers. A tradition has prevailed that the Roman fleet was reduced to ashes in the port of Syracuse by the burning-glasses of Archimedes; and it is asserted that a similar expedient was employed by Proclus to destroy the Gothic vessels in the harbour of Constantinople, and to protect his benefactor Anastasius against the bold enterprise of Vitalian. A machine was fixed on the walls of the city, consisting of an hexagon mirror of polished brass, with many smaller and movable polygons to receive and reflect the rays of the meridian sun; and a consuming flame was darted to the distance, perhaps, of two hundred feet.

The truth of these two extraordinary facts is invalidated by the silence of the most authentic historians; and the use of burning-glasses was never adopted in the attack or defence of places. Yet the admirable experiments of a French philosopher [Buffon] have demonstrated the possibility of such a mirror; and, since it is possible, we are more disposed to attribute the art to the greatest mathematicians of antiquity, than to give the merit of the fiction to the idle fancy of a monk or a sophist. According to another story [told by John Malalas [h]], Proclus applied sulphur to the destruction of the Gothic fleet; in a modern imagination, the name of sulphur is instantly connected with the suspicion of gunpowder, and that suspicion is propagated by the secret arts of his disciple Anthemius.

The fame of Metrodorus the grammarian, and of Anthemius the mathematician and architect, reached the ears of the emperor Justinian, who invited them to Constantinople; and while the one instructed the rising generation in the schools of eloquence, the other filled the capital and provinces with more lasting monuments of his art. In a trifling dispute, relative to the

[532 A.D.]

walls or windows of their contiguous houses, he had been vanquished by the eloquence of his neighbour Zeno; but the orator was defeated in his turn by the master of mechanics, whose malicious, though harmless, stratagems are darkly represented by the ignorance of Agathias. In a lower room, Anthemius arranged several vessels or cauldrons of water, each of them covered by the wide bottom of a leathern tube, which rose to a narrow top, and was artificially conveyed among the joists and rafters of the adjacent building. A fire was kindled beneath the cauldron; the steam of the boiling water ascended through the tubes; the house was shaken by the efforts of imprisoned air, and its trembling inhabitants might wonder that the city was unconscious of the earthquake which they had felt.

A Byzantine Noble

At another time the friends of Zeno, as they sat at table, were dazzled by the intolerable light which flashed in their eyes from the reflecting mirrors of Anthemius; they were astonished by the noise which he produced from the collision of certain minute and sonorous particles; and the orator declared in tragic style to the senate, that a mere mortal must yield to the power of an antagonist who shook the earth with the trident of Neptune, and imitated the thunder and lightning of Jove himself. The genius of Anthemius and his colleague Isidore the Milesian was excited and employed by a prince whose taste for architecture had degenerated into a mischievous and costly passion. His favourite architects submitted their designs and difficulties to Justinian, and discreetly confessed how much their laborious meditations were surpassed by the intuitive knowledge or celestial inspiration of an emperor whose views were always directed to the benefit of his people, the glory of his reign, and the salvation of his soul.

## THE BUILDING OF ST. SOPHIA

The principal church, which was dedicated by the founder of Constantinople to St. Sophia, or the eternal Wisdom, had been twice destroyed by fire; after the exile of John Chrysostom, and during the *Nika* of the blue and green factions. No sooner did the tumult subside than the Christian populace deplored their sacrilegious rashness; but they might have rejoiced in the calamity, had they foreseen the glory of the new temple which, at the end of forty days, was strenuously undertaken by the piety of Justinian. The ruins were cleared away, a more spacious plan was described, and, as it required the consent of some proprietors of ground, they obtained the most exorbitant terms from the eager desires and timorous conscience of

the monarch. Anthemius formed the design, and his genius directed the hands of ten thousand workmen, whose payment in pieces of fine silver was never delayed beyond the evening. The emperor himself, clad in a linen tunic, surveyed each day their rapid progress, and encouraged their diligence by his familiarity, his zeal, and his rewards.

The new cathedral of St. Sophia was consecrated by the patriarch, five years, eleven months, and ten days, from the first foundation; and in the midst of the solemn festival, Justinian exclaimed with devout vanity, "Glory be to God, who hath thought me worthy to accomplish so great a work; I have vanquished thee, O Solomon!" But the pride of the Roman Solomon, before twenty years had elapsed, was humbled by an earthquake, which overthrew the eastern part of the dome. Its splendour was again restored by the perseverance of the same prince; and, in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, Justinian celebrated the second dedication of a temple, which remains, after twelve centuries, a stately monument of his fame. The architecture of St. Sophia, which is now converted into the principal mosque, has been imitated by the Turkish sultans, and that venerable pile continues to excite the fond admiration of the Greeks, and the more rational curiosity of European travellers. The eye of the spectator is disappointed by an irregular prospect of half domes and shelving roofs; the western front, the principal approach, is destitute of simplicity and magnificence; and the scale of dimensions has been much surpassed by several of the Latin cathedrals. But the architect, who first erected an aërial cupola, is entitled to the praise of bold design and skilful execution.

The altar itself, a name which insensibly became familiar to Christian ears, was placed in the eastern recess, artificially built in the form of a demi-cylinder; and this sanctuary communicated by several doors with the sacristy, the vestry, the baptistery, and the contiguous buildings, subservient either to the pomp of worship or the private use of the ecclesiastical ministers. The memory of past calamities inspired Justinian with a wise resolution, that no wood, except for the doors, should be admitted into the new edifice; and the choice of the materials was applied to the strength, the lightness, or the splendour of the respective parts. The solid piles which sustained the cupola were composed of huge blocks of freestone, hewn into squares and triangles, fortified by circles of iron, and firmly cemented by the infusion of lead and quicklime; but the weight of the cupola was diminished by the levity of its substance, which consists either of pumice-stone, that floats in the water, or of bricks from the isle of Rhodes, five times less ponderous than the ordinary sort. The whole frame of the edifice was constructed of brick; but those base materials were concealed by a crust of marble; and the inside of St. Sophia, the cupola, the two larger and the six smaller semi-domes, the walls, the hundred columns, and the pavement, delight even the eyes of barbarians with a rich and variegated picture.

A poet, who beheld the primitive lustre of St. Sophia, enumerates the colours, the shades, and the spots of ten or twelve marbles, jaspers, and porphyries, which nature had profusely diversified, and which were blended and contrasted as it were by a skilful painter. The triumph of Christ was adorned with the last spoils of paganism; but the greater part of these costly stones was extracted from the quarries of Asia Minor, the isles and continent of Greece, Egypt, Africa, and Gaul. Eight columns of porphyry, which Aurelian had placed in the temple of the sun, were offered by the piety of a Roman matron; eight others, of green marble, were presented by the ambitious zeal of the magistrates of Ephesus: both are admirable by their

[538 A.D.]

size and beauty; but every order of architecture disclaims their fantastic capitals.

A variety of ornaments and figures was curiously expressed in mosaic; and the images of Christ, of the Virgin, of saints, and of angels, which have been defaced by Turkish fanaticism, were dangerously exposed to the superstition of the Greeks. According to the sanctity of each object the precious metals were distributed in thin leaves or in solid masses. The balustrade of the choir, the capitals of the pillars, the ornaments of the doors and galleries, were of gilt bronze; the spectator was dazzled by the glittering aspect of the cupola; the sanctuary contained forty thousand pounds' weight of silver; and the holy vases and vestments of the altar were of the purest gold, enriched with inestimable gems. Before the structure of the church had risen two cubits above the ground, 45,200 pounds were already consumed; and the whole expense amounted to 320,000 pounds; each reader, according to the measure of his belief, may estimate their value either in gold or silver; but the sum of £1,000,000 sterling is the result of the lowest computation. A magnificent temple is a laudable monument of national taste and religion, and the enthusiast who entered the dome of St. Sophia might be tempted to suppose that it was the residence, or even the workmanship, of the Deity. Yet how dull is the artifice, how insignificant is the labour, if it be compared with the formation of the vilest insect that crawls upon the surface of the temple!

### OTHER BUILDINGS OF JUSTINIAN

So minute a description of an edifice which time has respected may attest the truth and excuse the relation of the innumerable works, both in the capital and provinces, which Justinian constructed on a smaller scale and less durable foundations.[1] In Constantinople alone, and the adjacent suburbs, he dedicated twenty-five churches to the honour of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints; most of these churches were decorated with marble and gold; and their various situation was skilfully chosen in a populous square, or a pleasant grove; on the margin of the seashore, or on some lofty eminence which overlooked the continents of Europe and Asia.

The Virgin of Jerusalem might exult in the temple erected by her imperial votary on a most ungrateful spot, which afforded neither ground nor materials to the architect. A level was formed, by raising part of a deep valley to the height of the mountain. The stones of a neighbouring quarry were hewn into regular forms; each block was fixed on a peculiar carriage, drawn by forty of the strongest oxen, and the roads were widened for the passage of such enormous weights. Lebanon furnished her loftiest cedars for the timbers of the church; and the seasonable discovery of a vein of red marble supplied its beautiful columns, two of which, the supporters of the exterior portico, were esteemed the largest in the world.

The pious munificence of the emperor was diffused over the Holy Land: and if reason should condemn the monasteries of both sexes which were built or restored by Justinian, yet charity must applaud the wells which he sank,

[1] The six books of the *Edifices* of Procopius are thus distributed. The first is confined to Constantinople; the second includes Mesopotamia and Syria; the third, Armenia and the Euxine; the fourth, Europe; the fifth, Asia Minor and Palestine; the sixth, Egypt and Atrica. Italy is forgotten by the emperor or the historian, who published this work of adulation before the date (555 A.D.) of its final conquest.

and the hospitals which he founded, for the relief of the weary pilgrims. The schismatical temper of Egypt was ill entitled to the royal bounty; but in Syria and Africa some remedies were applied to the disasters of wars and earthquakes, and both Carthage and Antioch, emerging from their ruins, might revere the name of their gracious benefactor.

Almost every saint in the calendar acquired the honours of a temple; almost every city of the empire obtained the solid advantages of bridges, hospitals, and aqueducts; but the severe liberality of the monarch disdained to indulge his subjects in the popular luxury of baths and theatres. While Justinian laboured for the public service, he was not unmindful of his own dignity and ease. The Byzantine palace, which had been damaged by the conflagration, was restored with new magnificence; and some notion may be conceived of the whole edifice by the vestibule, or hall, which, from the doors perhaps, or the roof, was surnamed *chalce*, or the brazen. The dome of a spacious quadrangle was supported by massy pillars; the pavement and walls were encrusted with many-coloured marbles — the emerald green of Laconia, the fiery red and the white Phrygian stone, intersected with veins of a sea-green hue; the mosaic paintings of the dome and sides represented the glories of the African and Italian triumphs.

On the Asiatic shore of the Propontis, at a small distance to the east of Chalcedon, the costly palace and gardens of Heræum were prepared for the summer residence of Justinian, and more especially of Theodora. The poets of the age have celebrated the rare alliance of nature and art, the harmony of the nymphs of the groves, the fountains, and the waves; yet the crowd of attendants who followed the court complained of their inconvenient lodgings, and the nymphs were too often alarmed by the famous Porphyrio, a whale of ten cubits in breadth and thirty in length, who was stranded at the mouth of the river Sangaris, after he had infested more than half a century the seas of Constantinople.

### FORTIFICATIONS

The fortifications of Europe and Asia were multiplied by Justinian; but the repetition of those timid and fruitless precautions exposes to a philosophic eye the debility of the empire. From Belgrade to the Euxine, from the conflux of the Save to the mouth of the Danube, a chain of above fourscore fortified places was extended along the banks of the great river. Single watch-towers were changed into spacious citadels; vacant walls, which the engineers contracted or enlarged according to the nature of the ground, were filled with colonies or garrisons; a strong fortress defended the ruins of Trajan's bridge, and several military stations affected to spread beyond the Danube the pride of the Roman name. But that name was divested of its terrors; the barbarians, in their annual inroads, passed and contemptuously repassed before these useless bulwarks; and the inhabitants of the frontier, instead of reposing under the shadow of the general defence, were compelled to guard, with incessant vigilance, their separate habitations.

The solitude of ancient cities was replenished; the new foundations of Justinian acquired, perhaps too hastily, the epithets of impregnable and populous; and the auspicious place of his own nativity attracted the grateful reverence of the vainest of princes. Under the name of *Justiniana Prima* the obscure village of Tauresium became the seat of an archbishop and a prefect, whose jurisdiction extended over seven warlike provinces of Illyricum, and the corrupt appellation of *Giustendil* still indicates, about twenty miles

to the south of Sophia, the residence of a Turkish sanjak. For the use of the emperor's countrymen, a cathedral, a palace, and an aqueduct were speedily constructed; the public and private edifices were adapted to the greatness of a royal city; and the strength of the walls resisted, during the lifetime of Justinian, the unskilful assaults of the Huns and Slavonians. Their progress was sometimes retarded, and their hopes of rapine were disappointed, by the innumerable castles which, in the provinces of Dacia, Epirus, Thessaly, Macedonia, and Thrace, appear to cover the whole face of the country. Six hundred of these forts were built or repaired by the emperor: but it seems reasonable to believe that the far greater part consisted only of a stone or brick tower, in the midst of a square or circular area, which was surrounded by a wall and ditch, and afforded in a moment of danger some protection to the peasants and cattle of the neighbouring villages.

Yet these military works, which exhausted the public treasure, could not remove the just apprehensions of Justinian and his European subjects. The warm baths of Anchialus in Thrace were rendered as safe as they were salutary; but the rich pastures of Thessalonica were foraged by the Scythian cavalry; the delicious vale of Tempe, three hundred miles from the Danube, was continually alarmed by the sound of war; and no unfortified spot, however distant or solitary, could securely enjoy the blessings of peace. The straits of Thermopylæ, which seemed to protect, but which had so often betrayed, the safety of Greece, were diligently strengthened by the labours of Justinian. From the edge of the seashore, through the forest and valleys, and as far as the summit of the Thessalian Mountains, a strong wall was continued, which occupied every practicable entrance. Instead of a hasty crowd of peasants, a garrison of two thousand soldiers was stationed along the rampart; granaries of corn and reservoirs of water were provided for their use; and by a precaution that inspired the cowardice which it foresaw, convenient fortresses were erected for their retreat. The walls of Corinth, overthrown by an earthquake, and the mouldering bulwarks of Athens and Platæa, were carefully restored; the barbarians were discouraged by the prospect of successive and painful sieges; and the naked cities of Peloponnesus were covered by the fortifications of the Isthmus of Corinth.

At the extremity of Europe, another peninsula, the Thracian Chersonesus, runs three days' journey into the sea, to form, with the adjacent shores of Asia, the straits of the Hellespont. The intervals between eleven populous towns were filled by lofty woods, fair pastures, and arable lands; and the isthmus, of thirty-seven stadia or furlongs, had been fortified by a Spartan general nine hundred years before the reign of Justinian. In an age of freedom and valour, the slightest rampart may prevent a surprise; and Procopius appears insensible of the superiority of ancient times, while he praises the solid construction and double parapet of a wall whose long arms stretched on either side into the sea, but whose strength was deemed insufficient to guard the Chersonesus, if each city, and particularly Gallipoli and Sestos, had not been secured by their peculiar fortifications.

The long wall, as it was emphatically styled, was a work as disgraceful in the object as it was respectable in the execution. The riches of a capital diffuse themselves over the neighbouring country, and the territory of Constantinople, a paradise of nature, was adorned with the luxurious gardens and villas of the senators and opulent citizens. But their wealth served only to attract the bold and rapacious barbarians; the noblest of the Romans, in the bosom of peaceful indolence, were led away into Scythian

captivity, and their sovereign might view, from his palace, the hostile flames which were insolently spread to the gates of the imperial city. At the distance only of forty miles, Anastasius was constrained to establish a last frontier; his long wall, of sixty miles from the Propontis to the Euxine, proclaimed the impotence of his arms; and as the danger became more imminent, new fortifications were added by the indefatigable prudence of Justinian.

Asia Minor, after the submission of the Isaurians, remained without enemies and without fortifications. Those bold savages, who had disdained to be the subjects of Gallienus, persisted 230 years in a life of independence and rapine. The most successful princes respected the strength of the mountains and the despair of the natives; their fierce spirit was sometimes soothed with gifts, and sometimes restrained by terror; and a military count, with three legions, fixed his permanent and ignominious station in the heart of the Roman provinces.

If we extend our view from the tropic to the mouth of the Tanais, we may observe on one hand the precautions of Justinian to curb the savages of Ethiopia, and on the other the long walls which he constructed in Crimea for the protection of his friendly Goths, a colony of three thousand shepherds and warriors. From that peninsula to Trebizond, the eastern curve of the Euxine was secured by forts, by alliance, or by religion; and the possession of Lazica, the Colchos of ancient, the Mingrelia of modern geography, soon became the object of an important war. Trebizond, in after times the seat of a romantic empire, was indebted to the liberality of Justinian for a church, an aqueduct, and a castle, whose ditches are hewn in the solid rock. From that maritime city, a frontier line of five hundred miles may be drawn to the fortress of Circesium, the last Roman station on the Euphrates.

Among the Roman cities beyond the Euphrates, we distinguish two recent foundations, which were named from Theodosius and the relics of the martyrs, and two capitals, Amida and Edessa, which are celebrated in the history of every age. Their strength was proportioned, by Justinian, to the danger of their situation. A ditch and palisade might be sufficient to resist the artless force of the cavalry of Scythia; but more elaborate works were required to sustain a regular siege against the arms and treasures of the great king. His skilful engineers understood the methods of conducting deep mines, and of raising platforms to the level of the rampart; he shook the strongest battlements with his military engines, and sometimes advanced to the assault with a line of movable turrets on the backs of elephants. In the great cities of the East the disadvantage of space, perhaps of position, was compensated by the zeal of the people, who seconded the garrison in the defence of their country and religion; and the fabulous promise of the Son of God, that Edessa should never be taken, filled the citizens with valiant confidence and chilled the besiegers with doubt and dismay.

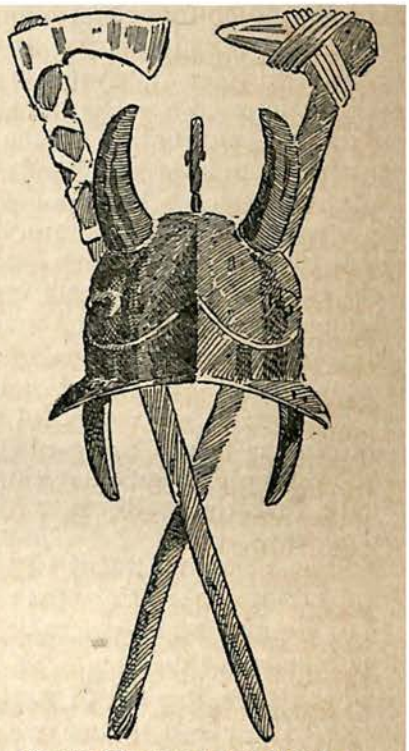
The subordinate towns of Armenia and Mesopotamia were diligently strengthened, and the posts which appeared to have any command of ground or water were occupied by numerous forts, substantially built of stone or more hastily erected with the obvious materials of earth and brick. The eye of Justinian investigated every spot; and his cruel precautions might attract the war into some lonely vale, whose peaceful natives, connected by trade and marriage, were ignorant of national discord and the quarrels of princes. Westward of the Euphrates, a sandy desert extends above six hundred miles to the Red Sea. Nature had interposed a vacant solitude between the

[529-541 A.D.]

ambition of two rival empires; the Arabians, till Mohammed arose, were formidable only as robbers, and in the proud security of peace the fortifications of Syria were neglected on the most vulnerable side.

## SUPPRESSION OF THE SCHOOLS

Justinian suppressed the schools of Athens and the consulship of Rome, which had given so many sages and heroes to mankind. Both these institutions had long since degenerated from their primitive glory; yet some reproach may be justly inflicted on the avarice and jealousy of a prince by whose hands such venerable ruins were destroyed.



GOTHIC WEAPONS AND HELMET

The schools of Athens were protected by the wisest and most virtuous of the Roman princes. The library which Hadrian founded was placed in a portico, adorned with pictures, statues, and a roof of alabaster, and supported by one hundred columns of Phrygian marble. The public salaries were assigned by the generous spirit of the Antonines; and each professor, of politics, of rhetoric, of the platonic, the peripatetic, the stoic, and the epicurean philosophy, received an annual stipend of ten thousand drachmæ [or more than £300 sterling]. After the death of Marcus these liberal donations, and the privileges attached to the thrones of science, were abolished and revived, diminished and enlarged; but some vestige of royal bounty may be found under the successors of Constantine, and their arbitrary choice of an unworthy candidate might tempt the philosophers of Athens to regret the days of independence and poverty. It is remarkable that the impartial favour of the Antonines was bestowed on the four adverse sects of philosophy, which they considered as equally useful, or at least as equally innocent.

The Gothic arms were less fatal to the schools of Athens than the establishment of a new religion, whose ministers superseded the exercise of reason, resolved every question by an article of faith, and condemned the infidel or sceptic to eternal flames. In many a volume of laborious controversy they exposed the weakness of the understanding and the corruption of the heart, insulted human nature in the sages of antiquity, and proscribed the spirit of philosophical inquiry, so repugnant to the doctrine or at least to the temper of an humble believer. The surviving sect of the platonists, whom Plato would have blushed to acknowledge, extravagantly mingled a sublime theory with the practice of superstition and magic; and as they remained alone in the midst of a Christian world, they indulged a secret rancour against the government of the church and the state, whose severity was still suspended over their heads.

About a century after the reign of Julian, Proclus was permitted to teach in the philosophic chair of the academy; and such was his industry that he

frequently, in the same day, pronounced five lessons and composed seven hundred lines. His sagacious mind explored the deepest questions of morals and metaphysics, and he ventured to urge eighteen arguments against the Christian doctrine of the creation of the world. But, in the intervals of study, he personally conversed with Pan, Æsculapius, and Minerva, in whose mysteries he was secretly initiated, and whose prostrate statues he adored in the devout persuasion that the philosopher, who is a citizen of the universe, should be the priest of its various deities. An eclipse of the sun announced his approaching end; and his life, with that of his scholar Isidore, compiled by two of their most learned disciples, exhibits a deplorable picture of the second childhood of human reason.

Yet the golden chain, as it was fondly styled, of the Platonic succession, continued forty-four years from the death of Proclus to the edict of Justinian, which imposed a perpetual silence on the schools of Athens, and excited the grief and indignation of the few remaining votaries of Grecian science and superstition. Seven friends and philosophers, Diogenes and Hermias, Eulalius and Priscian, Damascius, Isidore, and Simplicius, who dissented from the religion of their sovereign, embraced the resolution of seeking in a foreign land the freedom which was denied in their native country. They had heard, and they credulously believed, that the republic of Plato was realised in the despotic government of Persia, and that a patriot king reigned over the happiest and most virtuous of nations. They were soon astonished by the natural discovery that Persia resembled the other countries of the globe; that Chosroes, who affected the name of a philosopher, was vain, cruel, and ambitious; that bigotry and a spirit of intolerance prevailed among the Magi; that the nobles were haughty, the courtiers servile, and the magistrates unjust; that the guilty sometimes escaped, and that the innocent were often oppressed.

The disappointment of the philosophers provoked them to overlook the real virtues of the Persians; and they were scandalised, more deeply perhaps than became their profession, with the plurality of wives and concubines, the incestuous marriages, and the custom of exposing dead bodies to the dogs and vultures, instead of hiding them in the earth or consuming them with fire. Their repentance was expressed by a precipitate return, and they loudly declared that they had rather die on the borders of the empire, than enjoy the wealth and favour of the barbarian. From this journey, however, they derived a benefit which reflects the purest lustre on the character of Chosroes. He required that the seven sages, who had visited the court of Persia, should be exempted from the penal laws which Justinian enacted against his pagan subjects; and this privilege, expressly stipulated in a treaty of peace, was guarded by the vigilance of a powerful mediator.[1]

Simplicius and his companions ended their lives in peace and obscurity; and as they left no disciples, they terminate the long list of Grecian philosophers, who may be justly praised, notwithstanding their defects, as the wisest and most virtuous of their contemporaries. The writings of Simplicius are now extant. His physical and metaphysical commentaries on Aristotle have passed away with the fashion of the times; but his moral interpretation of Epictetus is preserved in the library of nations as a classic book, most excellently adapted to direct the will, to purify the heart, and to confirm the understanding, by a just confidence in the nature both of God and man.

[1] Agathias *c* relates this curious story. Chosroes ascended the throne in the year 531, and made his first peace with the Romans in the beginning of 533.

[541 A.D.]

### EXTINCTION OF THE ROMAN CONSULSHIP

About the same time that Pythagoras first invented the appellation of philosopher, liberty and the consulship were founded at Rome by the elder Brutus. The first magistrates of the republic had been chosen by the people to exercise, in the senate and in the camp, the powers of peace and war which were afterwards translated to the emperors. But the tradition of ancient dignity was long revered by the Romans and barbarians. The Gothic historian Jordanes[i] applauds the consulship of Theodoric as the height of all temporal glory;[1] the king of Italy himself congratulates those annual favourites of fortune, who without the cares enjoyed the splendour of the throne; and at the end of a thousand years two consuls were created by the sovereigns of Rome and Constantinople, for the sole purpose of giving a date to the year and a festival to the people. But the expenses of this festival, in which the wealthy and the vain aspired to surpass their predecessors, insensibly arose to the enormous sum of £80,000 sterling; the wisest senators declined a useless honour, which involved the certain ruin of their families; and to this reluctance we should impute the frequent chasms in the last age of the consular *fasti*.

The predecessors of Justinian had assisted from the public treasures the dignity of the less opulent candidates; the avarice of that prince preferred the cheaper and more convenient method of advice and regulation. Seven processions or spectacles was the number to which his edict confined the horse and chariot races, the athletic sports, the music and pantomimes of the theatre, and the hunting of wild beasts; and small pieces of silver were discreetly substituted for the gold medals which had always excited tumult and drunkenness when they were scattered with a profuse hand among the populace. Notwithstanding these precautions and his own example, the succession of consuls finally ceased in the thirteenth year of Justinian, whose despotic temper might be gratified by the silent extinction of a title which admonished the Romans of their ancient freedom.

### THE VANDALIC WAR

When Justinian ascended the throne, about fifty years after the fall of the Western Empire, the kingdoms of the Goths and Vandals had obtained a solid, and, as it might seem, a legal establishment, both in Europe and Africa. The titles which Roman victories had inscribed were erased with equal justice by the sword of the barbarians; and their successful rapine derived a more venerable sanction from time, from treaties, and from the oaths of fidelity, already repeated by a second or third generation of obedient subjects.

After Rome herself had been stripped of the imperial purple, the princes of Constantinople assumed the sole and sacred sceptre of the monarchy; demanded, as their rightful inheritance, the provinces which had been subdued by the consuls or possessed by the Cæsars; and feebly aspired to deliver their faithful subjects of the West from the usurpation of heretics and barbarians. The execution of this splendid design was in some degree reserved for Justinian. During the first five years of his reign, he reluctantly waged a costly and unprofitable war against Persia; till his pride submitted

[1 Theodoric himself, according to Cassiodorus,[j] claimed to model his policy on the Roman, and said to Anastasius, "Our kingdom is an imitation of yours."]

to his ambition, and he purchased, at the price of £440,000 [$2,200,000], the benefit of a precarious truce which, in the language of both nations, was dignified with the appellation of "the endless peace." The safety of the East enabled the emperor to employ his forces against the Vandals; and the internal state of Africa afforded an honourable motive and promised a powerful support to the Roman arms.

According to the testament of the founder, the African kingdom had lineally descended to Hilderic, the eldest of the Vandal princes. A mild disposition inclined the son of a tyrant, the grandson of a conqueror, to prefer the counsels of clemency and peace; and his accession was marked by the salutary edict which restored two hundred bishops to their churches, and allowed the free profession of the Athanasian Creed. But the Catholics accepted, with cold and transient gratitude, a favour so inadequate to their pretensions, and the virtues of Hilderic offended the prejudices of his countrymen. The Arian clergy presumed to insinuate that he had renounced the faith, and the soldiers more loudly complained that he had degenerated from the courage of his ancestors. His ambassadors were suspected of a secret and disgraceful negotiation in the Byzantine court; and his general, the Achilles, as he was named, of the Vandals, lost a battle against the naked and disorderly Moors.

The public discontent was exasperated by Gelimer, whose age, descent, and military fame gave him an apparent title to the succession. He assumed, with the consent of the nation, the reins of government; and his unfortunate sovereign sank without a struggle from the throne to a dungeon, where he was strictly guarded, with a faithful counsellor and his unpopular nephew, the Achilles of the Vandals. But the indulgence which Hilderic had shown to his Catholic subjects had powerfully recommended him to the favour of Justinian, who, for the benefit of his own sect, could acknowledge the use and justice of religious toleration; their alliance, while the nephew of Justin remained in a private station, was cemented by the mutual exchange of gifts and letters, and the emperor Justinian asserted the cause of royalty and friendship.

In two successive embassies, he admonished the usurper to repent of his treason, or to abstain at least from any further violence, which might provoke the displeasure of God and of the Romans; to reverence the laws of kindred and succession, and to suffer an infirm old man peaceably to end his days, either on the throne of Carthage or in the palace of Constantinople. The passions or even the prudence of Gelimer compelled him to reject these requests, which were urged in the haughty tone of menace and command; and he justified his ambition in a language rarely spoken in the Byzantine court, by alleging the right of a free people to remove or punish their chief magistrate, who had failed in execution of the kingly office. After this fruitless expostulation, the captive monarch was more rigorously treated, his nephew was deprived of his eyes, and the cruel Vandal, confident in his strength and distance, derided the vain threats and slow preparations of the emperor of the East. Justinian resolved to deliver or revenge his friend, Gelimer to maintain his usurpation; and the war was preceded, according to the practice of civilised nations, by the most solemn protestations that each party was sincerely desirous of peace.

The report of an African war was grateful only to the vain and idle populace of Constantinople, whose poverty exempted them from tribute and whose cowardice was seldom exposed to military service. But the wiser citizens, who judged of the future by the past, revolved in their memory the

[530–533 A.D.]

immense loss, both of men and money, which the empire had sustained in the expedition of Basiliscus. The troops, which after five laborious campaigns had been recalled from the Persian frontier, dreaded the sea, the climate, and the arms, of an unknown enemy.

The forces of the Vandals were diminished by discord and suspicion; the Roman armies were animated by the spirit of Belisarius, one of those heroic names which are familiar to every age and to every nation.

### BELISARIUS

The Africanus of New Rome was born, and perhaps educated, among the Thracian peasants,[1] without any of those advantages which had formed the virtues of the elder and younger Scipio — a noble origin, liberal studies, and the emulation of a free state. The silence of a loquacious secretary may be admitted to prove that the youth of Belisarius could not afford any subject of praise; he served, most assuredly with valour and reputation, among the private guards of Justinian; and when his patron became emperor, the domestic was promoted to military command. After a bold inroad into Pers-Armenia, in which his glory was shared by a colleague and his progress was checked by an enemy, Belisarius repaired to the important station of Dara, where he first accepted the service of Procopius,*f* the faithful companion and diligent historian of his exploits.

A Vandal Chief

Peace relieved him from the guard of the eastern frontier, and his conduct in the sedition of Constantinople amply discharged his obligations to the emperor. When the African war became the topic of popular discourse and secret deliberation, each of the Roman generals was apprehensive, rather than ambitious, of the dangerous honour; but as soon as Justinian had declared his preference of superior merit, their envy was rekindled by the unanimous applause which was given to the choice of Belisarius. The temper of the Byzantine court may encourage a suspicion that the hero was darkly assisted by the intrigues of his wife, the fair and subtle Antonina, who alternately enjoyed the confidence and incurred the hatred of the empress Theodora. The birth of Antonina was ignoble; she descended from a family of charioteers; and her chastity has been stained with the foulest reproach.

[1 Procopius*f* says he was born in a district of Thrace called Germania. According to Von Hammer*k* his name is a Slavonic word, "Belitzar," meaning "white prince." Bury*l* also thinks it Slavonic, but translates it "white dawn."]

Yet she reigned with long and absolute power over the mind of her illustrious husband; and if Antonina disdained the merit of conjugal fidelity, she expressed a manly friendship to Belisarius, whom she accompanied with undaunted resolution in all the hardships and dangers of a military life.

The preparations for the African war were not unworthy of the last contest between Rome and Carthage. The pride and flower of the army consisted of the guards of Belisarius, who, according to the pernicious indulgence of the times, devoted themselves by a particular oath of fidelity to the service of their patrons. Their strength and stature, for which they had been curiously selected, the goodness of their horses and armour, and the assiduous practice of all the exercises of war, enabled them to act whatever their courage might prompt; and their courage was exalted by the social honour of their rank, and the personal ambition of favour and fortune.

Five hundred transports, navigated by twenty thousand mariners of Egypt, Cilicia, and Ionia, were collected in the harbour of Constantinople. The smallest of these vessels may be computed at thirty, the largest at five hundred tons; and the fair average will supply an allowance, liberal but not profuse, of about one hundred thousand tons, for the reception of thirty-five thousand soldiers and sailors, of five thousand horses, of arms, engines, and military stores, and of a sufficient stock of water and provisions for a voyage perhaps of three months. The proud galleys, which in former ages swept the Mediterranean with so many hundred oars, had long since disappeared; and the fleet of Justinian was escorted only by ninety-two light brigantines, covered from the missile weapons of the enemy and rowed by two thousand of the brave and robust youth of Constantinople. Twenty-two generals are named, most of whom were afterwards distinguished in the wars of Africa and Italy; but the supreme command, both by land and sea, was delegated to Belisarius alone, with a boundless power of acting according to his discretion, as if the emperor himself were present. The separation of the naval and military professions is at once the effect and the cause of the modern improvements in the science of navigation and maritime war.

If Gelimer had been informed of the approach of the enemy, he must have delayed the conquest of Sardinia for the immediate defence of his person and kingdom.

A detachment of 5000 soldiers and 120 galleys would have joined the remaining forces of the Vandals; and the descendant of Genseric might have surprised and oppressed a fleet of deep-laden transports, incapable of action, and of light brigantines, that seemed only qualified for flight. Belisarius had secretly trembled when he overheard his soldiers, in the passage, emboldening each other to confess their apprehensions; if they were once on shore, they hoped to maintain the honour of their arms; but if they should be attacked at sea, they did not blush to acknowledge that they wanted courage to contend at the same time with the winds, the waves, and the barbarians. The knowledge of their sentiments decided Belisarius to seize the first opportunity of landing them on the coast of Africa, and he prudently rejected, in a council of war, the proposal of sailing with the fleet and army into the port of Carthage.

Three months after their departure from Constantinople, the men and horses, the arms and military stores, were safely disembarked, and five soldiers were left as a guard on board each of the ships, which were disposed in the form of a semicircle. The remainder of the troops occupied a camp on the sea shore, which they fortified according to ancient discipline with a ditch and rampart; and the discovery of a source of fresh water, while it allayed

THE ROMAN FORUM

(From the painting by Court)

[533 A.D.]

the thirst, excited the superstitious confidence, of the Romans. The next morning, some of the neighbouring gardens were pillaged; and Belisarius, after chastising the offenders, embraced the slight occasion, but the decisive moment, of inculcating the maxims of justice, moderation, and genuine policy. "When I first accepted the commission of subduing Africa, I depended much less," said the general, "on the numbers, or even the bravery, of my troops, than upon the friendly disposition of the natives and their immortal hatred to the Vandals. You alone can deprive me of this hope; if you continue to extort by rapine what might be purchased for a little money, such acts of violence will reconcile these implacable enemies, and unite them in a just and holy league against the invaders of their country."

These exhortations were enforced by a rigid discipline, of which the soldiers themselves soon felt and praised the salutary effects. The inhabitants, instead of deserting their houses or hiding their corn, supplied the Romans with a fair and liberal market; the civil officers of the province continued to exercise their functions in the name of Justinian; and the clergy, from motives of conscience and interest, assiduously laboured to promote the cause of a Catholic emperor.

Belisarius advanced without opposition as far as Grasse, a palace of the Vandal kings, at the distance of fifty miles from Carthage. The near approach of the Romans to Carthage filled the mind of Gelimer with anxiety and terror. He prudently wished to protract the war till his brother, with his veteran troops, should return from the conquest of Sardinia; and he now lamented the rash policy of his ancestors, who, by destroying the fortifications of Africa, had left him only the dangerous resource of risking a battle in the neighbourhood of his capital. The Vandal conquerors, from their original number of 50,000, were multiplied, without including their women and children, to 160,000 fighting men; and such forces, animated with valour and union, might have crushed at their first landing the feeble and exhausted bands of the Roman general. But the friends of the captive king were more inclined to accept the invitations than to resist the progress of Belisarius; and many a proud barbarian disguised his aversion to war under the more specious name of his hatred to the usurper. Yet the authority and promises of Gelimer collected a formidable army, and his plans were concerted with some degree of military skill.

An order was despatched to his brother Ammatas, to collect all the forces of Carthage and to encounter the van of the Roman army at the distance of ten miles from the city; his nephew Gibamund, with two thousand horse, was destined to attack their left, when the monarch himself, who silently followed, should charge their rear, in a situation which excluded them from the aid or even the view of their fleet. But the rashness of Ammatas was fatal to himself and his country. He anticipated the hour of the attack, outstripped his tardy followers, and was pierced with a mortal wound, after he had slain with his own hand twelve of his boldest antagonists. His Vandals fled to Carthage; the highway, almost ten miles, was strewed with dead bodies; and it seemed incredible that such multitudes could be slaughtered by the swords of three hundred Romans. The nephew of Gelimer was defeated, after a slight combat, by the six hundred Massagetæ; they did not equal the third part of his numbers, but each Scythian was fired by the example of his chief, who gloriously exercised the privilege of his family by riding foremost and alone to shoot the first arrow against the enemy.

In the meanwhile Gelimer himself, ignorant of the event and misguided by the windings of the hills, inadvertently passed the Roman army and reached the scene of action where Ammatas had fallen. He wept the fate of his brother and of Carthage, charged with irresistible fury the advancing squadrons, and might have pursued and perhaps decided the victory if he had not wasted those inestimable moments in the discharge of a vain though pious duty to the dead.[1]

While his spirit was broken by this mournful office, he heard the trumpet of Belisarius, who, leaving Antonina and his infantry in the camp, pressed forward with his guards and the remainder of the cavalry to rally his flying troops and to restore the fortune of the day. Much room could not be found in this disorderly battle for the talents of a general; but the king fled before the hero; and the Vandals, accustomed only to a Moorish enemy, were incapable of withstanding the arms and discipline of the Romans.[2] Gelimer retired with hasty steps towards the desert of Numidia; but he had soon the consolation of learning that his private orders for the execution of Hilderic and his captive friends had been faithfully obeyed. The tyrant's revenge was useful only to his enemies. The death of a lawful prince excited the compassion of his people; his life might have perplexed the victorious Romans; and the lieutenant of Justinian, by a crime of which he was innocent, was relieved from the painful alternative of forfeiting his honour or relinquishing his conquests.

## BELISARIUS ENTERS CARTHAGE

Belisarius was soon satisfied that he might confide, without danger, in the peaceful and friendly aspect of the capital. Carthage blazed with innumerable torches, the signals of the public joy; the chain was removed that guarded the entrance of the port; the gates were thrown open, and the people, with acclamations of gratitude, hailed and invited their Roman deliverers. The defeat of the Vandals and the freedom of Africa were announced to the city on the eve of St. Cyprian, when the churches were already adorned and illuminated for the festival of the martyr, whom three centuries of superstition had almost raised to a local deity. The Arians, conscious that their reign had expired, resigned the temple to the Catholics, who rescued their saint from profane hands, performed the holy rites, and loudly proclaimed the creed of Athanasius and Justinian. One awful hour reversed the fortunes of the contending parties.

The suppliant Vandals, who had so lately indulged the vices of conquerors, sought a humble refuge in the sanctuary of the church; while the merchants of the East were delivered from the deepest dungeon of the palace by their affrighted keeper, who implored the protection of his captives, and showed them, through an aperture in the wall, the sails of a Roman fleet. But the imperial fleet, advancing with a fair wind, steered through the narrow entrance of the Goletta, and occupied, in the deep and capacious lake

[1 Bury *l* calls this an "amiable imprudence."]

[2] The army of Belisarius was chiefly composed of barbarian mercenaries, whom he had trained to Roman discipline and strategy. But the inferiority of the Vandals, whose ancestors had conquered hosts still better drilled, proceeded from the degeneracy which was already commencing, after a residence of only thirty years in Africa. Now that they had been for a century masters of the country, the cause, which was shown then to have enervated them, had operated with progressive effect, and reduced them to a state almost as helpless and hopeless as that of the people whom they had subjugated.

[533-534 A.D.]

of Tunis, a secure station about five miles from the capital. No sooner was Belisarius informed of their arrival than he despatched orders that the greatest part of the mariners should be immediately landed to join the triumph and to swell the apparent numbers of the Romans. Before he allowed them to enter the gates of Carthage, he exhorted them, in a discourse worthy of himself and the occasion, not to disgrace the glory of their arms; and to remember that the Vandals had been the tyrants, but that they were the deliverers of the Africans, who must now be respected as the voluntary and affectionate subjects of their common sovereign.

The Romans marched through the streets in close ranks, prepared for battle if an enemy had appeared; the strict order maintained by the general imprinted on their minds the duty of obedience; and in an age in which custom and impunity almost sanctified the abuse of conquest, the genius of one man repressed the passions of a victorious army. The voice of menace and complaint was silent; the trade of Carthage was not interrupted; while Africa changed her master and her government, the shops continued open and busy; and the soldiers, after sufficient guards had been posted, modestly departed to the houses which were allotted for their reception. Belisarius fixed his residence in the palace. He seated himself on the throne of Genseric; accepted and distributed the barbaric spoil; granted their lives to the suppliant Vandals; and laboured to repair the damage which the suburb of Mandracium had sustained in the preceding night.

BYZANTINE OIL VASE

The fortifications of Carthage had alone been exempted from the general proscription; but in the reign of ninety-five years they were suffered to decay by the thoughtless and indolent Vandals. A wiser conqueror restored with incredible despatch the walls and ditches of the city. His liberality encouraged the workmen; the soldiers, the mariners, and the citizens vied with each other in the salutary labour; and Gelimer, who had feared to trust his person in an open town, beheld with astonishment and despair the rising strength of an impregnable fortress.

That unfortunate monarch, after the loss of his capital, applied himself to collect the remains of an army scattered, rather than destroyed, by the preceding battle; and the hopes of pillage attracted some Moorish bands to the standard of Gelimer. He encamped in the fields of Bulla, four days' journey from Carthage; insulted the capital, which he deprived of the use of an aqueduct; proposed a high reward for the head of every Roman; affected to spare the persons and property of his African subjects, and secretly negotiated with the Arian sectaries and the confederate Huns.

Under these circumstances, the conquest of Sardinia served only to aggravate his distress; he reflected with the deepest anguish that he had wasted, in that useless enterprise, five thousand of his bravest troops; and he read, with grief and shame, the victorious letters of his brother Zano, who expressed a sanguine confidence that the king, after the example of their ancestors, had

already chastised the rashness of the Roman invader. "Alas! my brother," replied Gelimer, "heaven has declared against our unhappy nation. While you have subdued Sardinia, we have lost Africa. No sooner did Belisarius appear with a handful of soldiers, than courage and prosperity deserted the cause of the Vandals. Your nephew Gibamund, your brother Ammatas, have been betrayed to death by the cowardice of their followers. Our horses, our ships, Carthage itself, and all Africa, are in the power of the enemy. Yet the Vandals still prefer an ignominious repose, at the expense of their wives and children, their wealth and liberty. Nothing now remains except the field of Bulla and the hope of your valour. Abandon Sardinia; fly to our relief; restore our empire, or perish by our side." On the receipt of this epistle, Zano imparted his grief to the principal Vandals; but the intelligence was prudently concealed from the natives of the island.

The troops embarked in 120 galleys at the port of Cagliari, cast anchor the third day on the confines of Mauretania, and hastily pursued their march to join the royal standard in the camp of Bulla. Mournful was the interview. The two brothers embraced, they wept in silence; no questions were asked of the Sardinian victory, no inquiries were made of the African misfortunes; they saw before their eyes the whole extent of their calamities, and the absence of their wives and children afforded a melancholy proof that either death or captivity had been their lot.

The languid spirit of the Vandals was at length awakened and united by the entreaties of their king, the example of Zano, and the instant danger which threatened their monarchy and religion. The military strength of the nation advanced to battle; and such was the rapid increase that, before their army reached Tricameron, about twenty miles from Carthage, they might boast, perhaps with some exaggeration, that they surpassed in a tenfold proportion the diminutive powers of the Romans. But these powers were under the command of Belisarius; and as he was conscious of their superior merit, he permitted the barbarians to surprise him at an unseasonable hour. The Romans were instantly under arms. A rivulet covered their front; the cavalry formed the first line, which Belisarius supported in the centre, at the head of five hundred guards; the infantry, at some distance, was posted in the second line; and the vigilance of the general watched the separate station and ambiguous faith of the Massagetæ, who secretly reserved their aid for the conquerors.

Zano, with the troops which had followed him to the conquest of Sardinia, was placed in the centre; and the throne of Genseric might have stood, if the multitude of Vandals had imitated their intrepid resolution. Casting away their lances and missile weapons, they drew their swords, and expected the charge. The Roman cavalry thrice passed the rivulet, they were thrice repulsed; and the conflict was firmly maintained till Zano fell, and the standard of Belisarius was displayed. Gelimer retreated to his camp; the Huns joined the pursuit, and the victors despoiled the bodies of the slain. Yet no more than fifty Romans and eight hundred Vandals were found on the field of battle; so inconsiderable was the carnage of a day which extinguished a nation and transferred the empire of Africa.

In the evening Belisarius led his infantry to the attack of the camp; and the pusillanimous flight of Gelimer exposed the vanity of his recent declarations that to the vanquished death was a relief, life a burden, and infamy the only object of terror. His departure was secret; but as soon as the Vandals discovered that their king had deserted them, they hastily dispersed, anxious only for their personal safety and careless of every object

[534 A.D.]

that is dear or valuable to mankind. The Romans entered the camp without resistance, and the wildest scenes of disorder were veiled in the darkness and confusion of the night. Every barbarian who met their swords was inhumanly massacred; their widows and daughters, as rich heirs or beautiful concubines, were embraced by the licentious soldiers; and avarice itself was almost satiated with the treasures of gold and silver, the accumulated fruits of conquests or economy in a long period of prosperity and peace. In this frantic search the troops, even of Belisarius, forgot their caution and respect. Intoxicated with lust and rapine, they explored in small parties, or alone, the adjacent fields, the woods, the rocks, and the caverns, that might possibly conceal any desirable prize; laden with booty, they deserted their ranks, and wandered, without a guide, on the high-road to Carthage; and if the flying enemies had dared to return, very few of the conquerors would have escaped.

Deeply sensible of the disgrace and danger, Belisarius passed an apprehensive night on the field of victory; at the dawn of day he planted his standard on a hill, recalled his guards and veterans, and gradually restored the modesty and obedience of the camp. It was equally the concern of the Roman general to subdue the hostile and to save the prostrate barbarian; and the suppliant Vandals, who could be found only in churches, were protected by his authority, disarmed, and separately confined, that they might neither disturb the public peace nor become the victims of popular revenge. After despatching a light detachment to tread the footsteps of Gelimer, he advanced with his whole army about ten days' march, as far as Hippo Regius, which no longer possessed the relics of St. Augustine. The season, and the certain intelligence that the Vandal had fled to the inaccessible country of the Moors, determined Belisarius to relinquish the vain pursuit and to fix his winter quarters at Carthage. From thence he despatched his principal lieutenant to inform the emperor that, in the space of three months, he had achieved the conquest of Africa.

Belisarius spoke the language of truth. The surviving Vandals yielded, without resistance, their arms and their freedom; the neighbourhood of Carthage submitted to his presence, and the more distant provinces were successively subdued by the report of his victory. Tripolis was confirmed in her voluntary allegiance; Sardinia and Corsica surrendered to an officer who carried, instead of a sword, the head of the valiant Zano; and the isles of Majorca, Minorca, and Yvica consented to remain a humble appendage of the African kingdom. Cæsarea, a royal city, which in looser geography may be confounded with the modern Algiers, was situate thirty days' march to the westward of Carthage; by land, the road was infested by the Moors; but the sea was open, and the Romans were now masters of the sea.

An active and discreet tribune sailed as far as the straits, where he occupied Septem or Ceuta, which rises opposite to Gibraltar on the African coast; that remote place was afterwards adorned and fortified by Justinian; and he seems to have indulged the vain ambition of extending his empire to the columns of Hercules. He received the messengers of victory at the time when he was preparing to publish the pandects of the Roman law; and the devout or jealous emperor celebrated the divine goodness, and confessed, in silence, the merit of his successful general. Impatient to abolish the temporal and spiritual tyranny of the Vandals, he proceeded without delay to the full establishment of the Catholic church. Her jurisdiction, wealth, and immunities, perhaps the most essential part of episcopal religion, were restored and amplified with a liberal hand; the Arian worship was suppressed; the

Donatist meetings were proscribed, and the synod of Carthage, by the voice of 217 bishops, applauded the just measure of pious retaliation.

On such an occasion, it may not be presumed that many orthodox prelates were absent; but the comparative smallness of their number, which in ancient councils had been twice or even thrice multiplied, most clearly indicates the decay both of the church and state. While Justinian approved himself the defender of the faith, he entertained an ambitious hope that his victorious lieutenant would speedily enlarge the narrow limits of his dominion to the space which they occupied before the invasion of the Moors and Vandals; and Belisarius was instructed to establish five dukes or commanders in the convenient stations of Tripolis, Leptis, Cirta, Cæsarea, and Sardinia, and to compute the military force of palatines or borderers that might be sufficient for the defence of Africa. The kingdom of the Vandals was not unworthy of the presence of a prætorian prefect; and four consulars, three presidents, were appointed to administer the seven provinces under his civil jurisdiction. After the departure of Belisarius, who acted by a high and special commission, no ordinary provision was made for a master-general of the forces; but the office of prætorian prefect was entrusted to a soldier; the civil and military powers were united, according to the practice of Justinian, in the chief governor; and the representative of the emperor in Africa, as well as in Italy, was soon distinguished by the appellation of exarch.

### TRIUMPH AND MEEKNESS OF BELISARIUS

Yet the conquest of Africa was imperfect till her former sovereign was delivered, either alive or dead, into the hands of the Romans. Doubtful of the event, Gelimer had given secret orders that a part of his treasure should be transported to Spain, where he hoped to find a secure refuge at the court of the king of the Visigoths. But these intentions were disappointed by accident, treachery, and the indefatigable pursuit of his enemies; when the royal captive accosted his conqueror, he burst into a fit of laughter. The crowd might naturally believe that extreme grief had deprived Gelimer of his senses; but in this mournful state, unseasonable mirth insinuated to more intelligent observers that the vain and transitory scenes of human greatness are unworthy of a serious thought.

Their contempt was soon justified by a new example of a vulgar truth—that flattery adheres to power, and envy to superior merit. The chiefs of the Roman army presumed to think themselves the rivals of a hero. Their private despatches maliciously affirmed that the conqueror of Africa, strong in his reputation and the public love, conspired to seat himself on the throne of the Vandals. Justinian listened with too patient an ear; and his silence was the result of jealousy rather than of confidence. An honourable alternative, of remaining in the province or of returning to the capital, was indeed submitted to the discretion of Belisarius; but he wisely concluded, from intercepted letters and the knowledge of his sovereign's temper, that he must either resign his head, erect his standard, or confound his enemies by his presence and submission. Innocence and courage decided his choice; his guards, captives, and treasures were diligently embarked, and so prosperous was the navigation that his arrival at Constantinople preceded any certain account of his departure from the port of Carthage. Such unsuspecting loyalty removed the apprehensions of Justinian; envy was silenced and inflamed by the public gratitude; and the third Africanus obtained the

[534–535 A.D.]

honours of a triumph, a ceremony which the city of Constantine had never seen and which ancient Rome, since the reign of Tiberius, had reserved for the auspicious arms of the Cæsars.

The glorious procession entered the gate of the Hippodrome, was saluted by the acclamations of the senate and people, and halted before the throne where Justinian and Theodora were seated to receive the homage of the captive monarch and the victorious hero. They both performed the customary adoration; and, falling prostrate on the ground, respectfully touched the footstool of a prince who had not unsheathed his sword and of a prostitute who had danced on the theatre; some gentle violence was used to bend the stubborn spirit of the grandson of Genseric, and, however trained to servitude, the genius of Belisarius must have secretly rebelled. He was immediately declared consul for the ensuing year, and the day of his inauguration resembled the pomp of a second triumph; his curule chair was borne aloft on the shoulders of captive Vandals; and the spoils of war, gold cups, and rich girdles, were profusely scattered among the populace.[1]

But the purest reward of Belisarius was in the faithful execution of a treaty for which his honour had been pledged to the king of the Vandals. The religious scruples of Gelimer, who adhered to the Arian heresy, were

BYZANTINE SILVER CUP

incompatible with the dignity of senator or patrician; but he received from the emperor an ample estate in the province of Galatia, where the abdicated monarch retired with his family and friends, to a life of peace, of affluence, and perhaps of content. The daughters of Hilderic were entertained with the respectful tenderness due to their age and misfortune; and Justinian and Theodora accepted the honour of educating and enriching the female descendants of the great Theodosius.

The bravest of the Vandal youth were distributed into five squadrons of cavalry, which adopted the name of their benefactor and supported in the Persian wars the glory of their ancestors. But these rare exceptions, the reward of birth or valour, are insufficient to explain the fate of a nation whose numbers, before a short and bloodless war, amounted to more than six hundred thousand persons. After the exile of their king and nobles,

[1 "When he beheld the splendour of the imperial court," Bury[l] says of Gelimer, "he merely said 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,' a remark which, as Ranke[m] notices, had a sort of historical signification. For along with Gelimer, Belisarius brought to Constantinople those vessels of gold, of which Gaiseric (or Genseric) had robbed Rome, and of which Titus had despoiled Jerusalem. They were part of the riches of the king to whom the words 'Vanity of vanities' are traditionally attributed." As Gibbon states, the vessels were later returned to the Christian church of Jerusalem.]

the servile crowd might purchase their safety by abjuring their character, religion, and language; and their degenerate posterity would be insensibly mingled with the common herd of African subjects. Yet even in the present age, and in the heart of the Moorish tribes, a curious traveller has discovered the white complexion and long flaxen hair of a northern race; and it was formerly believed that the boldest of the Vandals fled beyond the power, or even the knowledge, of the Romans, to enjoy their solitary freedom on the shores of the Atlantic ocean. Africa had been their empire, it became their prison; nor could they entertain a hope, or even a wish, of returning to the banks of the Elbe, where their brethren, of a spirit less adventurous, still wandered in their native forests.

It was impossible for cowards to surmount the barriers of unknown seas and hostile barbarians; it was impossible for brave men to expose their nakedness and defeat before the eyes of their countrymen, to describe the kingdoms which they had lost, and to claim a share of the humble inheritance, which, in a happier hour, they had almost unanimously renounced. In the country between the Elbe and the Oder, several populous villages of Lusatia are inhabited by the Vandals: they still preserve their language, their customs, and the purity of their blood; support, with some impatience, the Saxon or Prussian yoke; and serve with secret and voluntary allegiance the descendant of their ancient kings, who in his garb and present fortune is confounded with the meanest of his vassals. The name and situation of this unhappy people might indicate their descent from one common stock with the conquerors of Africa. But the use of a Slavonian dialect more clearly represents them as the last remnant of the new colonies, who succeeded to the genuine Vandals, already scattered or destroyed in the age of Procopius.

### SOLOMON'S WARS WITH THE MOORS

If Belisarius had been tempted to hesitate in his allegiance, he might have urged, even against the emperor himself, the indispensable duty of saving Africa from an enemy more barbarous than the Vandals. The origin of the Moors is involved in darkness; they were ignorant of the use of letters. Their limits cannot be precisely defined: a boundless continent was open to the Libyan shepherds; the change of seasons and pastures regulated their motions; and their rude huts and slender furniture were transported with the same ease as their arms, their families, and their cattle, which consisted of sheep, oxen, and camels. During the vigour of the Roman power, they observed a respectful distance from Carthage and the sea shore; under the feeble reign of the Vandals, they invaded the cities of Numidia, occupied the sea coast from Tingis (Tangier) to Cæsarea, and pitched their camps, with impunity, in the fertile province of Byzacium.

The formidable strength and artful conduct of Belisarius secured the neutrality of the Moorish princes, whose vanity aspired to receive, in the emperor's name, the ensigns of their regal dignity. They were astonished by the rapid event, and trembled in the presence of their conqueror. But his approaching departure soon relieved the apprehensions of a savage and superstitious people; the number of their wives allowed them to disregard the safety of their infant hostages; and when the Roman general hoisted sail in the port of Carthage, he heard the cries, and almost beheld the flames, of the desolated province. Yet he persisted in his resolution; and leaving

[534–535 A.D.]

only a part of his guards to reinforce the feeble garrisons, he entrusted the command of Africa to the eunuch Solomon, who proved himself not unworthy to be the successor of Belisarius.

In the first invasion, some detachments, with two officers of merit, were surprised and intercepted; but Solomon speedily assembled his troops, marched from Carthage into the heart of the country, and in two great battles destroyed sixty thousand of the barbarians. The Moors depended on their multitude, their swiftness, and their inaccessible mountains; and the aspect and smell of their camels are said to have produced some confusion in the Roman cavalry. But as soon as they were commanded to dismount, they derided this contemptible obstacle; as soon as the columns ascended the hills, the naked and disorderly crowd was dazzled by glittering arms and regular evolutions; and the menace of their female prophets was repeatedly fulfilled, that the Moors should be discomfited by a beardless antagonist. The victorious eunuch advanced thirteen days' journey from Carthage, to besiege Mount Aurasius, the citadel and at the same time the garden of Numidia. That range of hills, a branch of the great Atlas, contains, within a circumference of 120 miles, a rare variety of soil and climate; the intermediate valleys and elevated plains abound with rich pastures, perpetual streams, and fruits of a delicious taste and uncommon magnitude. This fair solitude is decorated with the ruins of Lambesa, a Roman city, once the seat of a legion, and the residence of forty thousand inhabitants.

The Ionic temple of Æsculapius is encompassed with Moorish huts; and the cattle now graze in the midst of an amphitheatre, under the shade of Corinthian columns. A sharp perpendicular rock rises above the level of the mountain, where the African princes deposited their wives and treasure; and a proverb is familiar to the Arabs, that the man may eat fire who dares to attack the craggy cliffs and inhospitable natives of Mount Aurasius. This hardy enterprise was twice attempted by the eunuch Solomon. From the first, he retreated with some disgrace; and in the second, his patience and provisions were almost exhausted; and he must again have retired, if he had not yielded to the impetuous courage of his troops, who audaciously scaled, to the astonishment of the Moors, the mountain, the hostile camp, and the summit of the Geminian rock. A citadel was erected to secure this important conquest, and to remind the barbarians of their defeat; and as Solomon pursued his march to the west, the long-lost province of Mauretanian Sitifi was again annexed to the Roman Empire. The Moorish War continued several years after the departure of Belisarius; but the laurels which he resigned to a faithful lieutenant may be justly ascribed to his own triumph.

The experience of past faults, which may sometimes correct the mature age of an individual, is seldom profitable to the successive generations of mankind. The nations of antiquity, careless of each other's safety, were separately vanquished and enslaved by the Romans. This awful lesson might have instructed the barbarians of the West to oppose, with timely counsels and confederate arms, the unbounded ambition of Justinian. Yet the same error was repeated, the same consequences were felt; and the Goths both of Italy and Spain, insensible of their approaching danger, beheld with indifference, and even with joy, the rapid downfall of the Vandals.

After the failure of the royal line, Theudes, a valiant and powerful chief, ascended, in 531, the throne of Spain, which he had formerly administered in the name of Theodoric and his infant grandson. Under his command the Visigoths besieged the fortress of Ceuta on the African coast; but while they

spent the sabbath day in peace and devotion, the pious security of their camp was invaded by a sally from the town; and the king himself, with some difficulty and danger, escaped from the hands of a sacrilegious enemy. It was not long before his pride and resentment were gratified by a suppliant embassy from the unfortunate Gelimer, who implored in his distress the aid of the Spanish monarch. But, instead of sacrificing these unworthy passions to the dictates of generosity and prudence, Theudes amused the ambassadors, till he was secretly informed of the loss of Carthage, and then dismissed them with obscure and contemptuous advice, to seek in their native country a true knowledge of the state of the Vandals.

The long continuance of the Italian War delayed the punishment of the Visigoths; and the eyes of Theudes were closed before they tasted the fruits of his mistaken policy. After his death, the sceptre of Spain was disputed by a civil war. The weaker candidate solicited the protection of Justinian; and ambitiously subscribed a treaty of alliance, which deeply wounded the independence and happiness of his country. Several cities, both on the ocean and the Mediterranean, were ceded to the Roman troops, who afterwards refused to evacuate those pledges, as it should seem, either of safety or payment; and as they were fortified by perpetual supplies from Africa, they maintained their impregnable stations, for the mischievous purpose of inflaming the civil and religious factions of the barbarians. Seventy years elapsed before this painful thorn could be extirpated from the bosom of the monarchy; and as long as the emperors retained any share of these remote and useless possessions, their vanity might number Spain in the list of their provinces, and the successors of Alaric in the rank of their vassals.[b]

## MILITARY TACTICS UNDER JUSTINIAN

During the time Justinian's generals were changing the state of Europe and destroying some of the nations which had dismembered the Western Empire, circumstances beyond the control of that international system of policy, of which the sovereigns of Constantinople and Persia were the arbiters, produced a general movement in the population of central Asia. The whole human race was thrown into a state of convulsive agitation, from the frontiers of China to the shores of the Atlantic. This agitation destroyed many of the existing governments, and exterminated several powerful nations; while, at the same time, it laid the foundation of the power of new states and nations, some of which have maintained their existence to the present times.

The Eastern Empire bore no inconsiderable part in raising this mighty storm in the West and in quelling its violence in the East, in exterminating the Goths and Vandals, and in arresting the progress of the Avars and Turks. Yet the number and composition of the Roman armies have often been treated by historians as weak and contemptible. It is impossible, in this sketch, to attempt any examination of the whole military establishment of the Roman Empire during Justinian's reign; but in noticing the influence exercised by the military system on the Greek population, it is necessary to make a few general observations. The army consisted of two distinct classes — the regular troops, and the mercenaries. The regular troops were composed both of native subjects of the Roman Empire, raised by conscription, and of barbarians, who had been allowed to occupy lands within the emperor's dominions and to retain their own usages on the

condition of furnishing a fixed number of recruits for the army. The Roman government still clung to the great law of the empire, that the portion of its subjects which paid the land tax could not be allowed to escape that burden by entering the army. The proprietors of the land were responsible for the tribute; the cultivators of the soil, both slaves and serfs, secured the amount of the public revenues; neither could be permitted to forego their fiscal obligations for their military duties.

For some centuries it had been more economical to purchase the service of the barbarians than to employ native troops; and perhaps, if the oppressive system of the imperial administration had not impaired the resources of the state and diminished the population by consuming the capital of the people, this might have long continued to be the case. Native troops were always drawn from the mountainous districts, which paid a scanty tribute, and in which the population found difficulty in procuring subsistence. The invasions of the barbarians, likewise, threw numbers of the peasantry of the provinces to the south of the Danube out of employment, and many of these entered the army. A supply of recruits was likewise obtained from the idle and needy population of the towns. The most active and intelligent soldiers were placed in the cavalry — a force that was drilled with the greatest care, subjected to the most exact discipline, and sustained the glory of the Roman arms in the field of battle. As the higher and middle classes in the provinces had, for ages, been excluded from the military profession, and the army had been at last composed chiefly of the rudest and most ignorant peasants, of enfranchised slaves, and naturalised barbarians, military service was viewed with aversion; and the greatest repugnance arose among the civilians to become soldiers. In the meantime, the depopulation of the empire daily increased the difficulty of raising the number of recruits required for a service which embraced an immense extent of territory and entailed a great destruction of human life.

The troops of the line, particularly the infantry, had deteriorated considerably in Justinian's time; but the artillery and engineer departments were not much inferior, in science and efficiency, to what they had been in the best days of the empire. Military resources, not military knowledge, had diminished. The same arsenals continued to exist; mere mechanical skill had been uninterruptedly exercised; and the constant demand which had existed for military mechanicians, armourers, and engineers had never allowed the theoretical instruction of this class to be neglected, nor their practical skill to decline from want of employment. This fact requires to be borne in mind.

The mercenaries formed the most valued and brilliant portion of the army; and it was the fashion of the day to copy and admire the dress and manners of the barbarian cavalry. The empire was now surrounded by numbers of petty princes who, though they had seized possession of provinces once belonging to the Romans, by force, and had often engaged in war with the emperor, still acknowledged a certain degree of dependence on the Roman power. Some of them, as the kings of the Heruli and the Gepidæ, and the king of Colchis, held their regal rank by a regular investiture from Justinian. These princes, and the kings of the Lombards, Huns, Saracens, and Moors, all received regular subsidies. Some of them furnished a number of their best warriors, who entered the Roman service and served in separate bands, under their own leaders and with their national weapons, but subjected to the regular organisation and discipline of the Roman armies, though not to the Roman system of military exercises and manœuvres.

Some of these corps of barbarians were also formed of volunteers, who were attracted by the high pay which they received and the license with which they were allowed to behave.

The superiority of these troops arose from natural causes. The northern nations who invaded the empire consisted of a population trained from infancy to warlike exercises, and following no profession but that of arms. Their lands were cultivated by the labour of their slaves, or by that of the Roman subjects who still survived in the provinces they had occupied; but their only pecuniary resources arose from the plunder of their neighbours or the subsidies of the Roman emperors. Their habits of life, the celerity of their movements, and the excellence of their armour rendered them the choicest troops of the age; and their most active warriors were generally engaged to serve in the imperial forces. The emperors preferred armies composed of a number of motley bands of mercenary foreigners, attached to their own persons by high pay, and commanded by chiefs who could never pretend to political rank and who had much to lose and little to gain by rebellion; for experience proved that they perilled their throne by entrusting the command of a national army to a native general, who, from a popular soldier, might become a dangerous rival. Though the barbarian mercenaries in the service of Rome generally proved far more efficient troops than their free countrymen, yet they were on the whole unequal to the native Roman cavalry of Justinian's army, the *cataphracti*, sheathed in complete steel on the Persian model, and armed with the Grecian spear, who were still the best troops in a field of battle, and were the real type of the chivalry of the Middle Ages.

A GOTH

Justinian weakened the Roman army in several ways by his measures of reform. His anxiety to reduce its expenditure induced him to diminish the establishment of camels, horses, and chariots, which attended the troops for transporting the military machines and baggage. This train had been previously very large, as it was calculated to save the peasantry from any danger of having their labours interrupted, or their cattle seized, under the pretext of being required for transport. Numerous abuses were introduced by diminishing the pay of the troops, and by neglecting to pay them with regularity and to furnish them with proper food and clothing. At the same time, the efficiency of the army in the field was more seriously injured by continuing the policy adopted by Anastasius, of restricting the power of the generals; a policy however which, it must be confessed, was not unnecessary in order to avoid greater evils. This is evident from the numerous rebellions in Justinian's reign, and the absolute want of any national or patriotic feeling in the majority of the Roman officers.

Large armies were at times composed of a number of corps, each commanded by its own officer, over whom the nominal commander-in-chief had little or no authority; and it is to this circumstance that the unfortunate results of some of the Gothic and Persian campaigns are to be attributed,

and not to any inferiority of the Roman troops. Even Belisarius himself, though he gave many proofs of attachment to Justinian's throne, was watched with the greatest jealousy. He was treated with constant distrust, and his officers were at times encouraged to dispute his measures, and never punished for disobeying his orders. The fact is that Belisarius might, if so disposed, have assumed the purple, and perhaps dethroned his master. Narses was the only general who was implicitly trusted and steadily supported; but Narses was an aged eunuch, and could never have become emperor.

The imperial military forces consisted of 150,000 men;[1] and though the extent of the frontier which these troops were compelled to guard was very great, and lay open to the incursions of many active hostile tribes, still Justinian was able to assemble some admirably appointed armies for his foreign expeditions. The armament which accompanied Belisarius to Africa consisted of ten thousand infantry, five thousand cavalry, and twenty thousand sailors. Belisarius must have had about thirty thousand troops under his command in Italy before the taking of Ravenna. Germanus, when he arrived in Africa, found that only one-third of the Roman troops about Carthage had remained faithful, and the rebels under Stozas amounted to eight thousand men. As there were still troops in Numidia which had not joined the deserters, the whole Roman force in Africa cannot have been less than fifteen thousand. Narses, in the year 551, when the empire began to show evident proofs of the bad effects of Justinian's government, could assemble thirty thousand chosen troops, an army which defeated the veterans of Totila and destroyed the fierce bands of Franks and Alamanni which hoped to wrest Italy from the Romans. The character of the Roman troops, in spite of all that modern writers have said to depreciate them, still stood so high that Totila, the warlike monarch of the Goths, strove to induce them to join his standard by offers of high pay. No army had yet proved itself equal to the Roman on the field of battle; and their exploits in Spain, Africa, Colchis, and Mesopotamia, proved their excellence; though the defeats which they sustained, both from the Persians and on the Danube, reveal the fact that their enemies were improving in military science, and watching every opportunity of availing themselves of any neglect of the Roman government in maintaining the efficiency of the army.

## DECADENCE OF THE SOLDIERY

Numerous examples could be cited of almost incredible disorder in the armies, originating generally in the misconduct of the imperial government. Belisarius attempted, but found it impossible, to enforce strict discipline,[2] when the soldiers were unpaid and the officers authorised to act independently of his orders. Two thousand Heruli ventured to quit his standard in Italy, and, after marching round the Adriatic, were pardoned by Justinian and again engaged in the imperial service. Procopius mentions repeatedly that the conduct of the unpaid and unpunished troops ruined the provinces; and in Africa, no less than three Roman officers, Stozas, Maximin, and Gontharis, attempted to render themselves independent, and were supported by large bodies of troops. The Greeks were the only portion of the population

[1] Agathias[c] states that the military establishment of the empire once consisted of 645,000 men. It probably included the local militia and the garrisons.

[2] According to Procopius[f] Belisarius told his troops that the Persians excelled them in discipline.

who were considered as sincerely attached to the imperial government, or at least who would readily defend it against every enemy; and accordingly Gontharis, when he wished to secure Carthage, ordered all the Greeks to be murdered without distinction. The Greeks were, however, from their position and rank in society as burgesses or taxpayers, almost entirely excluded from the army, and though they furnished the greater part of the sailors for the fleet, they were generally an unwarlike population. Witiges, the Gothic king, calls the Roman army of Belisarius an army of Greeks, a band of pirates, actors, and mountebanks.

One of the most unfortunate measures of Justinian was the disbanding all the provincial militia. This is incidentally mentioned in the *Secret History* of Procopius, who informs us that Thermopylæ had been previously guarded by two thousand of this militia; but that this corps was dissolved, and a garrison of regular troops placed in Greece. As a general measure it was probably dictated by a plan of financial reform, and not by any fear of popular insurrection; but its effects were extremely injurious to the empire in the declining state of society, and in the increasing disorganisation of the central power; and though it may possibly have prevented some provinces from recovering their independence by their own arms, it prepared the way for the easy conquests of the Avars and Arabs. Justinian was desirous of centralising all power, and rendering all public burdens uniform and systematic; and had adopted the opinion that it was cheaper to defend the empire by walls and fortresses than by a movable army. The practice of moving the troops with great celerity to defend the frontiers had induced the officers to abandon the ancient practice of fortifying a regular camp; and at last even the art of encamping was neglected. The barbarians, however, could always move with greater rapidity than the regular troops of the empire.

To secure the frontiers, Justinian adopted a plan of constructing extensive lines supported by innumerable forts and castles, in which he placed garrisons, in order that they might be ready to sally out on the invading bands. These lines extended from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, and were further strengthened by the long wall of Anastasius, which covered Constantinople by walls protecting the Thracian Chersonesus and the peninsula of Pallene, and by fortifications at Thermopylæ, and at the Isthmus of Corinth, which were all carefully repaired. At all these posts permanent garrisons were maintained. The eulogy of Procopius on the public edifices of Justinian seems almost irreconcilable with the events of the latter years of his reign; for Zabergan, king of the Huns, penetrated through breaches he found unrepaired in the long wall, and advanced almost to the very suburbs of Constantinople.

Another instance of the declining state of military tactics may be mentioned, as it must have originated in the army itself, and not in consequence of any arrangements of the government. The combined manœuvres of the divisions of the regiments had been so neglected that the bugle-calls once used had fallen into desuetude, and were unknown to the soldiers. The motley recruits, of dissimilar habits, could not acquire with the requisite rapidity a perception of the delicacy of the ancient music, and the Roman infantry no longer moved

> "In perfect phalanx, to the Dorian mood,
> Of flutes and soft recorders."

It happened, during the siege of Auximum in Italy, that Belisarius was placed in difficulty from the want of an instantaneous means of communicat-

ing orders to the troops engaged in skirmishing with the Goths. On this occasion it was suggested to him by Procopius, his secretary and the historian of his wars, to replace the forgotten bugle-calls by making use of the brazen trumpet of the cavalry to sound a charge, and of the infantry bugle to summon a retreat.

Foreigners were preferred by the emperors as the occupants of the highest military commands; and the confidence with which the barbarian chiefs were honoured by the court enabled many to reach the highest rank in the army. Narses, the most distinguished military leader after Belisarius, was a Pers-Armenian captive. Peter, who commanded against the Persians in the campaign of 528, was also a Pers-Armenian. Pharas, who besieged Gelimer in Mount Pappua, was a Herulian. Mundus, who commanded in Illyria and Dalmatia, was a Gepid prince. Chilbud, who, after several victories, perished with his army in defending the frontiers against the Slavonians, was of northern descent, as may be inferred from his name. Solomon, who governed Africa with great courage and ability, was a eunuch from Dara. Artaban was an Armenian prince. Johannes Troglita the patrician, the hero of the poem of Corippus called the *Johannid*, is also supposed to have been an Armenian. Yet the empire might still have furnished excellent officers, as well as valiant troops; for the Isaurians and Thracians continued to distinguish themselves in every field of battle, and were equal in courage to the fiercest of the barbarians.

It became the fashion in the army to imitate the manners and habits of the barbarians; their headlong personal courage became the most admired quality, even in the highest rank; and nothing tended more to hasten the decay of the military art. The officers in the Roman armies became more intent on distinguishing themselves for personal exploits than for exact order and strict discipline in their corps. Even Belisarius himself appears at times to have forgotten the duties of a general in his eagerness to exhibit his personal valour on his bay charger; though he may, on such occasions, have considered that the necessity of keeping up the spirits of his army was a sufficient apology for his rashness. Unquestionably the army, as a military establishment, had declined in excellence ere Justinian ascended the throne, and his reign tended to sink it much lower; yet it is probable that it was never more remarkable for the enterprising valour of its officers or for their personal skill in the use of their weapons. The death of numbers of the highest rank, in battles and skirmishes in which they rashly engaged, proves this fact. There was, however, one important feature of ancient tactics still preserved in the Roman armies, which gave them a decided superiority over their enemies. They had still the confidence in their discipline and skill to form their ranks, and encounter their opponents in line; the bravest of their enemies, whether on the banks of the Danube or the Tigris, only ventured to charge them, or receive their attack, in close masses.[d]

# CHAPTER IV

## THE LATER YEARS OF JUSTINIAN'S REIGN

[535–565 A.D.]

### BYZANTIUM RIDS ROME OF THE GOTHS

THE empire of the Ostrogoths, though established on principles of a just administration by the wisdom of the great Theodoric, soon began to suffer as complete a national demoralisation as that of the Vandals, though the Goths themselves, from being more civilised and living more directly under the restraint of laws which protected the property of their Roman subjects, had not become individually so corrupted by the possession of wealth.

The conquest of Italy[1] had not produced any very great revolution in the state of the country. The Romans had long been accustomed to be defended in name, but in fact to be ruled, by the commanders of the mercenary troops in the emperor's service. The Goths, even after the conquest, allowed them to retain two-thirds of their landed estates, with all their movable property; and as they had really been as completely excluded from military service under their own emperors, their social condition underwent but little change. Policy induced Theodoric to treat the inhabitants of Italy with mildness. The permanent maintenance of his conquests required a considerable revenue, and that revenue could only be supplied by the industry and civilisation of his Italian subjects. His sagacity told him that it was wiser to tax the Romans than to plunder them, and that it was necessary, in order to secure the fruits of a regular system of taxation, to leave them in the possession of those laws and privileges which enabled them to defend their civilisation.

The kingdom which the great Theodoric left to his grandson Athalaric, under the guardianship of his daughter Amalasuntha, embraced not only Italy, Sicily, and a portion of the south of France; it also included Dalmatia, a part of Illyricum, Pannonia, Noricum, and Rætia. In these extensive dominions, the Gothic race formed but a small part of the population; and yet the Goths, from the privileges which they enjoyed, were everywhere

[1 For a fuller account of the war in Italy, see the latter part of this volume, under "The Western Empire."]

regarded with jealousy by the bulk of the inhabitants. Dissensions arose in the royal family; Athalaric died young; Amalasuntha was murdered by Theodatus, his successor; and as she had been in constant communication with the court of Constantinople, this crime afforded Justinian a decent pretext for interfering in the affairs of the Goths. To prepare the way for the reconquest of Italy, Belisarius was sent to attack Sicily, which he invaded with an army of 7500 men, in the year 535, and subjected without difficulty. During the same campaign, Dalmatia was conquered by the imperial arms, recovered by the Goths, but again reconquered by Justinian's troops. A rebellion of the troops in Africa arrested, for a while, the progress of Belisarius, and compelled him to visit Carthage; but he returned to Sicily in a short time, and crossing over to Rhegium marched directly to Neapolis. As he proceeded, he was everywhere welcomed by the inhabitants, who were then almost universally Greeks; even the Gothic commander in the south of Italy favoured the progress of the Roman general.

The city of Neapolis made a vigorous defence; but after a siege of three weeks it was taken by introducing into the place a body of troops through the passage of an ancient aqueduct. The conduct of Belisarius, after the capture of the city, was dictated by policy, and displayed very little humanity. As the inhabitants had shown some disposition to assist the Gothic garrison in defending the city, and as such conduct would have greatly increased the difficulty of his campaign in Italy, in order to intimidate the population of other cities he appears to have winked at the pillage of the town, to have tolerated the massacre of many of the citizens in the churches, where they had sought an asylum, and to have overlooked a sedition of the lowest populace, in which the leaders of the Gothic party were assassinated. From Neapolis, Belisarius marched forward to Rome.

Only sixty years had elapsed since Rome had been conquered by Odoacer; and during this period its population, the ecclesiastical and civil authority of its bishop who was the highest dignitary of the Christian world, and the influence of its senate which still continued to be in the eyes of mankind the most honourable political body in existence, enabled it to preserve a species of independent civic constitution. Theodoric had availed himself of this municipal government to smooth away many of the difficulties which presented themselves in the administration of Italy. The Goths, however, in leaving the Romans in possession of their own civil laws and institutions, had not diminished their aversion to a foreign yoke; yet as they possessed no distinct feelings of nationality apart from their connection with the imperial domination and their religious orthodoxy, they never aspired to independence, and were content to turn their eyes towards the emperor of the East as their legitimate sovereign. Belisarius, therefore, entered the Eternal City rather as a friend than as a conqueror; but he had hardly entered it before he perceived that it would be necessary to take every precaution to defend his conquest against the new Gothic king Witiges. He immediately repaired the walls of Rome, strengthened them with a breastwork, collected large stores of provisions, and prepared to sustain a siege.

The Gothic war forms an important epoch in the history of the city of Rome; for within the space of sixteen years it changed masters five times, and suffered three severe sieges. Its population was almost destroyed; its public buildings and its walls must have undergone many changes, according to the exigencies of the various measures required for its defence. It has, consequently, been too generally assumed that the existing walls indicate the exact position of the walls of Aurelian. This period is also

memorable for the ruin of many monuments of ancient art, which the generals of Justinian destroyed without compunction.[1]

Witiges laid siege to Rome with an army said by Procopius[d] to have amounted to 150,000 men; yet this army was insufficient to invest the whole circuit of the city. The Gothic king distributed his troops in seven fortified camps; six were formed to surround the city, and the seventh was placed to protect the Milvian bridge. Five camps covered the space from the Prænestine to the Flaminian gates, and the remaining camp was formed beyond the Tiber, in the plain below the Vatican. By these arrangements the Goths only commanded about half the circuit of Rome, and the roads to Naples and to the ports at the mouth of the Tiber remained open. The Roman infantry was now the weakest part of a Roman army. Even in the defence of a fortified city it was subordinate to the cavalry, and the military superiority of the Roman arms was sustained by mercenary horsemen. It is strange to find the tactics of the Middle Ages described by Procopius in classic Greek.

In spite of the prudent arrangements adopted by Belisarius to insure supplies of provisions from his recent conquests in Sicily and Africa, Rome suffered very severely from famine during the siege; but the Gothic army was compelled to undergo equal hardships, and suffered far greater losses from disease. The communications of the garrison with the coast were for a time interrupted, but at last a body of five thousand fresh troops and an abundant supply of provisions, despatched by Justinian to the assistance of Belisarius, entered Rome. Shortly after the arrival of this reinforcement, the Goths found themselves constrained to abandon the siege, in which they had persevered for a year. Justinian again augmented his army in Italy, by sending over seven thousand troops under the command of the eunuch Narses, a man whose military talents were in no way inferior to those of Belisarius, and whose name occupies an equally important place in the history of Italy. The emperor, guided by the prudent jealousy which dictated the strictest control over all the powerful generals of the empire, had conferred on Narses an independent authority over his own division, and that general, presuming too far on his knowledge of Justinian's feelings, ventured to throw serious obstacles in the way of Belisarius. The dissensions of the two generals delayed the progress of the Roman arms. The Goths availed themselves of the opportunity to continue the war with vigour; they succeeded in reconquering Mediolanum, which had admitted a Roman garrison, and sacked the city, which was second only to Rome in wealth and population. They massacred the whole male population, and behaved with such cruelty that three hundred thousand persons were said to have perished — a number which probably only indicates the whole population of Mediolanum at this period.

Witiges, finding his resources inadequate to check the conquests of Belisarius, solicited the aid of the Franks, and despatched an embassy to Chosroes to excite the jealousy of the Persian monarch. The Franks, under Theodebert, entered Italy, but they were soon compelled to retire; and Belisarius, being placed at the head of the whole army by the recall of Narses, soon terminated the war. Ravenna, the Gothic capital, was invested; but

[1 "With the conquest of Rome by Belisarius," says Finlay,[b] "the history of the ancient city may be considered as terminating; and with his defence against Witiges commences the history of the Middle Ages — of the time of destruction and change." Similarly, though from different reasons, Bury[e] says of the plague of 542 A.D., "If we may speak of watersheds in history, this plague marks the watershed of what we call the ancient and what we call the mediæval age. Really nothing is more striking than the difference between the first half and the last half of Justinian's reign.]

[540 A.D.]

the siege was more remarkable for the negotiations which were carried on during its progress than for the military operations. The Goths, with the consent of Witiges, made Belisarius the singular offer of acknowledging him as the emperor of the West, on condition of his joining his forces to theirs, permitting them to retain their position and property in Italy, and thus ensuring them the possession of their nationality and their peculiar laws.

Perhaps neither the state of the mercenary army which he commanded nor the condition of the Gothic nation rendered the project very feasible. It is certain that Belisarius only listened to it, in order to hasten the surrender of Ravenna and secure the person of Witiges without further bloodshed. Italy submitted to Justinian, and the few Goths who still maintained their independence beyond the Po pressed Belisarius in vain to declare himself emperor. But even without these solicitations, his power had awakened the fears of his sovereign, and he was recalled, though with honour, from his command in Italy. He returned to Constantinople leading Witiges captive, as he had formerly appeared conducting Gelimer.

### FINLAY'S ESTIMATE OF BELISARIUS

Great as the talents of Belisarius really were, and sound as his judgment appears to have been, still it must be confessed that his name occupies a more prominent place in history than his merits are entitled to claim. The accident that his conquest put an end to two powerful monarchies, of his having led captive to Constantinople the representatives of the dreaded Genseric and the great Theodoric, joined with the circumstance that he enjoyed the singular good fortune of having his exploits recorded in the classic language of Procopius, the last historian of the Greeks, have rendered a brilliant career more brilliant from the medium through which it is seen. At the same time the tale of his blindness and poverty has extended a sympathy with his misfortunes into circles which would have remained indifferent to the real events of his history, and made his name an expression for heroic greatness reduced to abject misery by royal ingratitude.

But Belisarius, though he refused the Gothic throne and the empire of the West, did not despise nor neglect wealth; he accumulated riches which could not have been acquired by any commander-in-chief amidst the wars and famines of the period, without rendering the military and civil administration subservient to his pecuniary profit. On his return from Italy he lived at Constantinople in almost regal splendour, and maintained a body of seven thousand cavalry attached to his household.

In an empire where confiscation was an ordinary financial resource, and under a sovereign whose situation rendered jealousy only common prudence, it is not surprising that the wealth of Belisarius excited the imperial cupidity, and induced Justinian to seize great part of it. His fortune was twice reduced by confiscations. The behaviour of the general under his misfortunes, and the lamentable picture of his depression which Procopius has drawn, when he lost a portion of his wealth on his first disgrace, does not tend to elevate his character. At a later period, his wealth was again confiscated on an accusation of treason, and on this occasion it is said that he was deprived of his sight, and reduced to such a state of destitution that he begged his bread in a public square, soliciting charity with the exclamation, "Give Belisarius an obolus!" But ancient historians were ignorant of this fable, which has been rejected by every modern authority in Byzantine

history. Justinian, on calm reflection, disbelieved the treason imputed to a man who, in his younger days, had refused to ascend a throne; or else he pardoned what he supposed to be the error of a general to whose services he was so deeply indebted; and Belisarius, reinstated in some part of his fortune, died in possession of wealth and honour.

### THE GOTHS RENEW THE WAR

Belisarius had hardly quitted Italy when the Goths reassembled their forces. They were accustomed to rule, and nourished in the profession of arms. Justinian sent a civilian, Alexander the logothete, to govern Italy, hoping that his financial arrangements would render the new conquest a source of revenue to the imperial treasury.[1] The fiscal administration of the new governor soon excited great discontent. He diminished the number of the Roman troops, and put a stop to those profits which a state of war usually affords the military; while at the same time he abolished the pensions and privileges which formed no inconsiderable portion of the revenue of the higher classes, and which had never been entirely suppressed during the Gothic domination. Alexander may have acted in some cases with undue severity in enforcing these measures; but it is evident, from their nature, that he must have received express orders to put an end to what Justinian considered the lavish expenditure of Belisarius.

A GOTH OF QUALITY
(After Hottenroth)

A part of the Goths in the north of Italy retained their independence after the surrender of Witiges. They raised Hildebald to the throne, which he occupied about a year when he was murdered by one of his own guards. The tribe of Rugii then raised Eraric their leader to the throne; but on his entering into negotiations with the Romans he was murdered, after a reign of only five months. Totila was then elected king of the Goths, and had he not been opposed to the greatest men whom the declining age of the Roman Empire produced, he would probably have succeeded in restoring the Gothic monarchy in Italy. His successes endeared him to his countrymen, while the justice of his administration contrasted with the rapacity of Justinian's government, and gained him the respect and submission of the native provincials. He was on the point of commencing the siege of Rome, when Belisarius, who after his departure from Ravenna had been employed in the Persian War, was sent back to Italy to recover the ground already lost.

[1 According to Bury,[e] "Alexander was called 'Scissors' from his practice of clipping coins." Procopius says he "alienated the minds of the Italians from Justinian; and none of the soldiers were willing to undergo the hazard of war."]

[544–547 A.D.]

The imperial forces were completely destitute of that unity and military organisation which constitute a number of different corps into one army. The various bodies of troops were commanded by officers completely independent of one another, and obedient only to Belisarius as commander-in-chief. Justinian, acting on his usual maxims of jealousy, and distrusting Belisarius more than formerly, had retained the greater part of his bodyguard and all his veteran followers at Constantinople; so that he now appeared in Italy unaccompanied by a staff of scientific officers and a body of veteran troops on whose experience and discipline he could rely for implicit obedience to his orders. The heterogeneous elements of which his army was composed made all combined operations impracticable, and his position was rendered still more disadvantageous by the change that had taken place in that of his enemy. Totila was now able to command every sacrifice on the part of his followers, for the Goths, taught by their misfortunes and deprived of their wealth, felt the importance of union and discipline, and paid the strictest attention to the orders of their sovereign. The Gothic king laid siege to Rome, and Belisarius established himself in Porto, at the mouth of the Tiber; but all his endeavours to relieve the besieged city proved unsuccessful, and Totila compelled it to surrender under his eye and in spite of all his exertions.

The national and religious feelings of the orthodox Romans rendered them the irreconcilable enemies of the Arian Goths. Totila soon perceived that it would not be in his power to defend Rome against a scientific enemy and a hostile population, in consequence of the great extent of the fortifications, and the impossibility of dislodging the imperial troops from the forts at the mouth of the Tiber. But he also perceived that the Eastern emperors would be unable to maintain a footing in central Italy without the support of the Roman population, whose industrial, commercial, aristocratic, and ecclesiastical influence was concentrated in the city population of Rome. He therefore determined to destroy the Eternal City, and if policy authorise kings on great occasions to trample on the precepts of humanity, the king of the Goths might claim a right to destroy the race of the Romans. Even the statesman may still doubt whether the decision of Totila, if it had been carried into execution in the most merciless manner, would not have purified the moral atmosphere of Italian society.

He commenced the destruction of the walls; but either the difficulty of completing his project or the feelings of humanity which were inseparable from his enlightened ambition induced him to listen to the representations of Belisarius, who conjured him to abandon his barbarous scheme of devastation. Totila, nevertheless, did everything in his power to depopulate Rome; he compelled the inhabitants to retire into the Campania, and forced the senators to abandon their native city. It is to this emigration that the utter extinction of the old Roman race and civic government must be attributed; for when Belisarius, and at a later period Totila himself, attempted to repeople Rome, they laid the foundations of a new society, which connects itself rather with the history of the Middle Ages than with that of preceding times.

### BELISARIUS IN ROME

Belisarius entered the city after the departure of the Goths; and as he found it deserted, he had the greatest difficulty in putting it in a state of defence. But though Belisarius was enabled, by his military skill, to

defend Rome against the attacks of Totila, he was unable to make any head against the Gothic army in the open field; and after vainly endeavouring to bring back victory to the Roman standards in Italy, he received permission to resign the command and return to Constantinople. His want of success must be attributed solely to the inadequacy of the means placed at his disposal for encountering an active and able sovereign like Totila. The unpopularity of his second administration in Italy arose from the neglect of Justinian in paying the troops, and the necessity which that irregularity imposed on their commander of levying heavy contributions on the Italians, while it rendered the task of enforcing strict discipline, and of protecting the property of the people from the ill-paid soldiery, quite impracticable. Justice, however, requires that we should not omit to mention that Belisarius, though he returned to Constantinople with diminished glory, did not neglect his pecuniary interests, and came back without any diminution of his wealth.

As soon as Totila was freed from the restraint imposed on his movements by the fear of Belisarius, he quickly recovered Rome; and the loss of Italy appeared inevitable, when Justinian decided on making a new effort to retain it. As it was necessary to send a large army against the Goths, and invest the commander-in-chief with great powers, it is not probable that Justinian would have trusted any other of his generals more than Belisarius had he not fortunately possessed an able officer, the eunuch Narses, who could never rebel with the hope of placing the imperial crown on his own head. The assurance of his fidelity gave Narses great influence in the interior of the palace, and secured him a support which would never have been conceded to any other general. His military talents, and his freedom from the reproach of avarice or peculation, augmented his personal influence, and his diligence and liberality soon assembled a powerful army. The choicest mercenary troops — Huns, Herulians, Armenians, and Lombards — marched under his standard with the veteran Roman soldiers. The first object of Narses after his arrival in Italy was to force the Goths to risk a general engagement, trusting to the excellence of his troops and to his own skill in the employment of their superior discipline.

The rival armies met at Taginæ (Tadinum) near Nuceria (Nocera), and the victory of Narses was complete.[1] Totila and six thousand Goths perished, and Rome again fell under the dominion of Justinian. At the solicitation of the Goths, an army of Franks and Germans was permitted by Theobald, king of Austrasia, to enter Italy for the purpose of making a diversion in their favour. Bucelin, the leader of this army, was met by Narses on the banks of the Casilinus, near Capua. The forces of the Franks consisted of thirty thousand men, those of the Romans did not exceed eighteen thousand; but the victory of Narses was so complete that but few of the former escaped. The remaining Goths elected another king, Theias, who perished with his army near the banks of the Sarnus (Sarno). His death put an end to the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, and allowed Narses to turn his whole attention to the civil government of his conquests, and to establish security of property and a strict administration of justice. He appears to have been a man singularly well adapted to his situation, possessing the highest military talents, combined with a perfect knowledge of the civil and financial administration; and he was consequently able to estimate with exactness the sum which he could levy on the province and remit to Constantinople, with-

[1 Bury says that the place is in dispute, some placing it near Sassoferrato, and others near Scheggia. He feels that we are justified in placing the date as July or August, 552.]

out arresting the gradual improvement of the country. His fiscal government was, nevertheless, regarded by the Italians as extremely severe, and he was unpopular with the inhabitants of Rome.

The existence of a numerous Roman population in Spain, connected with the Eastern Empire by the memory of ancient ties, by active commercial relations, and by a strong orthodox feeling against the Arian Visigoths, enabled Justinian to avail himself of these advantages in the same manner as he had done in Africa and Italy. The king Theudes had attempted to make a diversion in Africa by besieging Ceuta, in order to call off the attention of Justinian from Italy. His attack was unsuccessful, but the circumstances were not favourable at the time for Justinian's attempting to revenge the injury. Dissensions in the country soon after enabled the emperor to take part in a civil war, and he seized the pretext of sending a fleet and troops to support the claims of a rebel chief, in order to secure the possession of a large portion of the south of Spain. The rebel Athanagild, having been elected king of the Visigoths, vainly endeavoured to drive the Romans out of the provinces which they had occupied. Subsequent victories extended the conquests of Justinian from the mouth of the Tagus, Ebora, and Corduba, along the coast of the ocean and of the Mediterranean, almost as far as Valentia; and at times the relations of the Romans with the Catholic population of the interior enabled them to carry their arms almost into the centre of Spain. The Eastern Empire retained possession of these distant conquests for about sixty years.[b]

### GIBBON'S ESTIMATE OF BELISARIUS AND HIS TIMES

Our estimate of personal merit is relative to the common faculties of mankind. The aspiring efforts of genius or virtue, either in active or speculative life, are measured not so much by their real elevation as by the height to which they ascend above the level of their age or country; and the same stature, which in a people of giants would pass unnoticed, must appear conspicuous in a race of pigmies. Leonidas and his three hundred companions devoted their lives at Thermopylæ; but the education of the infant, the boy, and the man had prepared, and almost insured, this memorable sacrifice; and each Spartan would approve, rather than admire, an act of duty of which himself and eight thousand of his fellow-citizens were equally capable.

The great Pompey might inscribe on his trophies that he had defeated in battle two millions of enemies, and reduced fifteen hundred cities from the lake Mæotis to the Red Sea; but the fortune of Rome flew before his eagles; the nations were oppressed by their own fears, and the invincible legions which he commanded had been formed by the habits of conquest and the discipline of ages. In this view, the character of Belisarius may be deservedly placed above the heroes of the ancient republic. His imperfections flowed from the contagion of the times; his virtues were his own, the free gift of nature or reflection; he raised himself without a master or a rival; and so inadequate were the arms committed to his hand that his sole advantage was derived from the pride and presumption of his adversaries. Under his command, the subjects of Justinian often deserved to be called Romans; but the unwarlike appellation of Greeks was imposed as a term of reproach by the haughty Goths, who affected to blush that they must dispute the kingdom of Italy with a nation of tragedians, pantomimes, and pirates.

The climate of Asia has indeed been found less congenial than that of Europe to military spirit; those populous countries were enervated by luxury, despotism, and superstition, and the monks were more expensive and more numerous than the soldiers of the East. The regular force of the empire had once amounted to 645,000 men: it was reduced, in the time of Justinian, to 150,000; and this number, large as it may seem, was thinly scattered over the sea and land—in Spain and Italy, in Africa and Egypt, on the banks of the Danube, the coast of Euxine, and the frontiers of Persia. The citizen was exhausted, yet the soldier was unpaid; his poverty was mischievously soothed by the privilege of rapine and indolence; and the tardy payments were detained and intercepted by the fraud of those agents who usurp, without courage or danger, the emoluments of war. Public and private distress recruited the armies of the state; but in the field, and still more in the presence of the enemy, their numbers were always defective.

The want of national spirit was supplied by the precarious faith and disorderly service of barbarian mercenaries. Even military honour, which has often survived the loss of virtue and freedom, was almost totally extinct. The generals, who were multiplied beyond the example of former times, laboured only to prevent the success, or to sully the reputation, of their colleagues; and they had been taught by experience that, if merit sometimes provoked the jealousy, error or even guilt would obtain the indulgence of a gracious emperor.

In such an age the triumphs of Belisarius, and afterwards of Narses, shine with incomparable lustre; but they are encompassed with the darkest shades of disgrace and calamity.[1]

### BARBARIC INROADS

Even the Gothic victories of Belisarius were prejudicial to the state, since they abolished the important barrier of the upper Danube, which had been so faithfully guarded by Theodoric and his daughter. For the defence of Italy, the Goths evacuated Pannonia and Noricum, which they left in a peaceful and flourishing condition; the sovereignty was claimed by the emperor of the Romans, the actual possession was abandoned to the boldness of the first invader. On the opposite banks of the Danube, the plains of upper Hungary and the Transylvanian hills were possessed, since the death of Attila, by the tribes of the Gepidæ, who respected the Gothic arms and despised not indeed the gold of the Romans but the secret motive of their annual subsidies.

The vacant fortifications of the river were instantly occupied by these barbarians; their standards were planted on the walls of Sirmium and Belgrade; and the ironical tone of their apology aggravated this insult on the majesty of the empire. "So extensive, O Cæsar, are your dominions, so numerous are your cities, that you are continually seeking for nations to whom, either in peace or war, you may relinquish these useless possessions. The Gepidæ are your brave and faithful allies; and if they have anticipated your gifts, they have shown a just confidence in your bounty." Their presumption was excused by the mode of revenge which Justinian embraced. Instead of asserting the rights of a sovereign for the protection of his subjects, the emperor invited a strange people to invade and possess the Roman

[1 "Belisarius," says Freeman, *f* "was perhaps the greatest commander that ever lived, as he did the greatest things with the smallest means."]

provinces between the Danube and the Alps; and the ambition of the Gepidæ was checked by the rising power and fame of the Lombards.

This corrupt appellation has been diffused in the thirteenth century by the merchants and bankers, the Italian posterity of these savage warriors: but the original name of Langobards is expressive only of the peculiar length and fashion of their beards.[1] About the time of Augustus and Trajan, a ray of historic light breaks on the darkness of their antiquities, and they are discovered, for the first time, between the Elbe and the Oder. Fierce beyond the example of the Germans, they delighted to propagate the tremendous belief that their heads were formed like the heads of dogs, and that they drank the blood of their enemies whom they vanquished in battle. The smallness of their numbers was recruited by the adoption of their bravest slaves; and alone, amidst their powerful neighbours, they defended by arms their high-spirited independence.

A Gothic Chief

In the tempest of the north, which overwhelmed so many names and nations, this little bark of the Lombards still floated on the surface. They gradually descended towards the south and the Danube, and at the end of four hundred years[2] they again appear with their ancient valour and renown. Their manners were not less ferocious. The assassination of a royal guest was executed in the presence and by the command of the king's daughter, who had been provoked by some words of insult and disappointed by his diminutive stature;[3] and a tribute, the price of blood, was imposed on the Lombards by his brother the king of the Heruli. Adversity revived a sense of moderation and justice, and the insolence of conquest was chastised by the signal defeat and irreparable dispersion of the Heruli, who were seated in the southern provinces of Poland.[4]

The victories of the Lombards recommended them to the friendship of the emperors; and at the solicitation of Justinian they passed the Danube to reduce, according to their treaty, the cities of Noricum and the fortresses of Pannonia. But the spirit of rapine soon tempted them beyond these ample limits; they wandered along the coast of the Adriatic as far as

[1 This is the old theory, and Hodgkin *g* says, "I confess that, to me, the old-fashioned derivation, that which was accepted by Isidore *h* and Paulus, still seems the most probable." The word *bard*, usually allied to the Latin *barba*, "beard," has also been referred to the old High German *barta*, "axe," and to *bord*, "shore," and some writers would translate Langobards as "Long-axe-men" or "Long-shore-men."]

[2 Hodgkin *g* says "three hundred years."]

[3 Paulus Diaconus *i* tells the story, I. 20. Rodulf was then king of the Heruli, and his brother was killed by the servants of King Tato, "seventh Lombard king."]

[4 Hodgkin *g* calls the Heruli "a perpetual puzzle to ethnologists," and quotes Zeuss, *j* who calls them "the most unstable of German tribes." Their seat at the moment in question is also variously guessed at, Hodgkin inclining to Hungary. This fatal battle took place about 508. The Lombards were Arians, — how they were converted we do not know, — and they brought into Italy a hierarchy of bishops, priests, and deacons.]

Dyrrhachium, and presumed, with familiar rudeness, to enter the towns and houses of their Roman allies, and to seize the captives who had escaped from their audacious hands. These acts of hostility, the sallies, as it might be pretended, of some loose adventurers, were disowned by the nation and excused by the emperor; but the arms of the Lombards were more seriously engaged by a contest of thirty years, which was terminated only by the extirpation of the Gepidæ.

The hostile nations often pleaded their cause before the throne of Constantinople; and the crafty Justinian, to whom the barbarians were almost equally odious, pronounced a partial and ambiguous sentence, and dexterously protracted the war by slow and ineffectual succours. Their strength was formidable, since the Lombards, who sent into the field several myriads of soldiers, still claimed, as the weaker side, the protection of the Romans. Their spirit was intrepid, yet such is the uncertainty of courage that the two armies were suddenly struck with a panic; they fled from each other, and the rival kings remained with their guards in the midst of an empty plain. A short truce was obtained, but their mutual resentment again kindled; and the remembrance of their shame rendered the next encounter more desperate and bloody. Forty thousand of the barbarians perished in the decisive battle[1] which broke the power of the Gepidæ, transferred the fears and wishes of Justinian, and first displayed the character of Alboin, the youthful prince of the Lombards and the future conqueror of Italy.

## SLAVIC INCURSIONS

The wild people who dwelt or wandered in the plains of Russia, Lithuania, and Poland might be reduced, in the age of Justinian, under the two great families of the Bulgarians and the Slavonians. According to the Greek writers, the former, who touched the Euxine and the lake of Mæotis, derived from the Huns their name or descent; and it is needless to renew the simple and well-known picture of Tatar manners. They were bold and dexterous archers, who drank the milk and feasted on the flesh of their indefatigable horses; whose flocks and herds followed, or rather guided, the motions of their roving camps; to whose inroads no country was remote or impervious, and who were practised in flight, though incapable of fear.

The nation was divided into two powerful and hostile tribes, who pursued each other with fraternal hatred. They eagerly disputed the friendship or rather the gifts of the emperor; and the distinction which nature had fixed between the faithful dog and the rapacious wolf was applied by an ambassador who received only verbal instructions from the mouth of his illiterate prince. The Bulgarians, of whatsoever species, were equally attracted by Roman wealth; they assumed a vague dominion over the Slavonian name, and their rapid marches could only be stopped by the Baltic Sea, or the extreme cold and poverty of the north. But the same race of Slavonians appears to have maintained, in every age, the possession of the same countries. Their numerous tribes, however distant or adverse, used one common language (it was harsh and irregular), and were known by the resemblance of their form, which deviated from the swarthy Tatar and approached without attaining the lofty stature and fair complexion of the German.

[1 Jordanes *k* says that "on both sides there fell over 6000 men. No equal battle has been heard of in our times since the days of Attila, except that of Calluc against the same Gepidæ, or of Mundo with the Goths." The date was about 554.]

Forty-six hundred villages were scattered over the provinces of Russia and Poland, and their huts were hastily built of rough timber, in a country deficient both in stone and iron. Erected, or rather concealed, in the depth of forests, on the banks of rivers or the edge of morasses, we may, not perhaps without flattery, compare them to the architecture of the beaver; which they resembled in a double issue to the land and water for the escape of the savage inhabitant — an animal less cleanly, less diligent, and less social than that marvellous quadruped. The fertility of the soil, rather than the labour of the natives, supplied the rustic plenty of the Slavonians. Their sheep and horned cattle were large and numerous, and the fields which they sowed with millet and panic, afforded, in the place of bread, a coarse and less nutritive food. The incessant rapine of their neighbours compelled them to bury this treasure in the earth; but on the appearance of a stranger it was freely imparted, by a people whose unfavourable character is qualified by the epithets of chaste, patient, and hospitable. As their supreme god, they adored an invisible master of the thunder. The rivers and the nymphs obtained their subordinate honours, and the popular worship was expressed in vows and sacrifice.

The Slavonians disdained to obey a despot, a prince, or even a magistrate; but their experience was too narrow, their passions too headstrong, to compose a system of equal law or general defence. Some voluntary respect was yielded to age and valour; but each tribe or village existed as a separate republic, and all must be persuaded where none could be compelled. They fought on foot, almost naked, and, except an unwieldy shield, without any defensive armour; their weapons of offence were a bow, a quiver of small poisoned arrows, and a long rope, which they dexterously threw from a distance, and entangled their enemy in a running noose. In the field the Slavonian infantry were dangerous by their speed, agility, and hardiness: they swam, they dived, they remained under water, drawing their breath through a hollow cane; and a river or lake was often the scene of their unsuspected ambuscade. But these were the achievements of spies and stragglers; the military art was unknown to the Slavonians; their name was obscure, and their conquests were inglorious.

The level country of Moldavia and Wallachia was occupied by the Antes (or Antai), a Slavonian tribe, which swelled the titles of Justinian with an epithet of conquest. Against the Antes he erected the fortifications of the lower Danube; and laboured to secure the alliance of a people seated in the direct channel of northern inundation, an interval of two hundred miles between the mountains of Transylvania and the Euxine Sea. But the Antes wanted power and inclination to stem the fury of the torrent; and the light-armed Slavonians, from a hundred tribes, pursued with almost equal speed the footsteps of the Bulgarian horse.[1] The payment of one piece of gold for each soldier procured a safe and easy retreat through the country of the Gepidæ, who commanded the passage of the upper Danube.

The hopes or fears of the barbarians, their intestine union or discord, the accident of a frozen or shallow stream, the prospect of harvest or vintage, the prosperity or distress of the Romans — were the causes which produced the uniform repetition of annual visits, tedious in the narrative and destructive in the event. The same year, and possibly the same month, in which Ravenna

[1 Bury [e] says, "the Bulgarians soon cease to be mentioned and it appears probable that they were subjugated by the neighbouring Slavs." He adds that these Bulgarians of the sixth century had nothing to do with the foundation of the Bulgarian Kingdom in the seventh century.]

surrendered was marked by an invasion of the Huns or Bulgarians,[1] so dreadful that it almost effaced the memory of their past inroads. They spread from the suburbs of Constantinople to the Ionian Gulf, destroyed thirty-two cities or castles, erased Potidæa which Athens had built and Philip had besieged, and repassed the Danube, dragging at their horses' heels 120,000 of the subjects of Justinian. In a subsequent inroad they pierced the wall of the Thracian Chersonesus, extirpated the habitations and the inhabitants, boldly traversed the Hellespont, and returned to their companions, laden with the spoils of Asia. Another party, which seemed a multitude in the eyes of the Romans, penetrated without opposition from the straits of Thermopylæ to the Isthmus of Corinth; and the last ruin of Greece has appeared an object too minute for the attention of history.

A Byzantine Costume

The works which the emperor raised for the protection but at the expense of his subjects served only to disclose the weakness of some neglected part; and the walls, which by flattery had been deemed impregnable, were either deserted by the garrison or scaled by the barbarians. Three thousand Slavonians, who insolently divided themselves into two bands, discovered the weakness and misery of a triumphant reign. They passed the Danube and the Hebrus, vanquished the Roman generals who dared to oppose their progress, and plundered with impunity the cities of Illyricum and Thrace, each of which had arms and numbers to overwhelm their contemptible assailants.

Whatever praise the boldness of the Slavonians may deserve, it is sullied by the wanton and deliberate cruelty which they are accused of exercising on their prisoners. Without distinction of rank, or age, or sex, the captives were impaled or flayed alive, or suspended between four posts and beaten with clubs till they expired, or enclosed in some spacious building and left to perish in the flames with the spoil and cattle which might impede the march of these savage victors. Perhaps a more impartial narrative would reduce the number, and qualify the nature, of these horrid acts; and they might sometimes be excused by the cruel laws of retaliation. In the siege of Topirus, whose obstinate defence had enraged the Slavonians, they massacred fifteen thousand males;[2] but they spared the women and children. The most valuable captives were always reserved for labour or ransom; the servitude was not rigorous, and the terms of their deliverance were speedy and moderate. But the subject or the historian of Justinian exhaled his just indignation in the language of complaint and reproach; and Procopius has confidently affirmed that, in a reign of thirty-two years, each annual inroad of the barbarians consumed two hundred thousand of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. The entire population of Turkish Europe, which nearly corresponds with the provinces

[1 Procopius *d* calls the Bulgarians "Huns." Roesler *l* calls the Cotrigur Huns "Bulgarians." The origins of these races will be taken up more fully in the later volumes of modern history.]

[2 Such a slaughter requires a far larger population than the obscure town of Topirus could probably have possessed.]

of Justinian, would perhaps be incapable of supplying six millions of persons, the result of this incredible estimate.

In the midst of these obscure calamities, Europe felt the shock of a revolution, which first revealed to the world the name and nation of the Turks.[c]

## TURKS AND AVARS

Since that period the Turks have always continued to occupy a memorable place in the history of mankind, as the destroyers of ancient civilisation. In their progress towards the West, they were preceded by the Avars, a people whose arrival in Europe produced the greatest alarm, whose dominion was soon widely extended, but whose complete extermination, or amalgamation with their subjects, leaves the history of their race a problem never likely to receive a very satisfactory solution. The Avars are supposed to have been a portion of the inhabitants of a powerful Asiatic empire which figures in the annals of China as ruling a great part of the centre of Asia, and extending to the Gulf of Corea. The great empire of the Avars was overthrown by a rebellion of their Turkish subjects, and the noblest caste soon became lost to history amidst the revolutions of the Chinese Empire.

The original seats of the Turks were in the country round the great chain of Mount Altai. As subjects of the Avars, they had been distinguished by their skill in working and tempering iron; their industry had procured them wealth, and wealth had inspired them with the desire for independence. After throwing off the yoke of the Avars, they waged war with that people, and compelled the military strength of the nation to fly before them in two separate bodies. One of these divisions fell back on China; the other advanced into western Asia, and at last entered Europe. The Turks engaged in a career of conquest, and in a few years their dominions extended from the Volga and the Caspian Sea to the shores of the ocean, or the Sea of Japan, and from the banks of the Oxus (Gihon) to the deserts of Siberia. The western army of the Avars, increased by many tribes who feared the Turkish government, advanced into Europe as a nation of conquerors, and not as a band of fugitives. The mass of this army is supposed to have been composed of people of the Turkish race, because those who afterwards bore the Avar name in Europe seem to have belonged to that family. It must not, however, be forgotten, that the mighty army of Avar emigrants might easily, in a few generations, lose all national peculiarities, and forget its native language, amidst the greater number of its Hunnish subjects, even if we should suppose the two races to have been originally derived from different stocks. The Avars, however, are sometimes styled Turks, even by the earliest historians. The use of the appellation Turk, in an extended sense, including the Mongol race, is found in Theophylactus Simocatta,[m] a writer possessing considerable knowledge of the affairs of eastern Asia, and who speaks of the inhabitants of the flourishing kingdom of Taugus as Turks. This application of the term appears to have arisen from the circumstance, that the part of China to which he alluded was subject at the time to a foreign, or, in his phrase, a Turkish dynasty.

The Avars soon conquered all the countries as far as the banks of the Danube, and before Justinian's death they were firmly established on the borders of Pannonia.[b]

They had followed the well-known road of the Volga, cherished the error of the nations who confounded them with the original Avars, and spread the

terror of that false though famous appellation, which had not, however, saved its lawful proprietors from the yoke of the Turks. After a long and victorious march, the new Avars arrived at the foot of Mount Caucasus, in the country of the Alans and Circassians, where they first heard of the splendour and weakness of the Roman Empire. They humbly requested their confederate, the prince of the Alans, to lead them to this source of riches; and their ambassador, with the permission of the governor of Lazica, was transported by the Euxine Sea to Constantinople. The whole city was poured forth to behold with curiosity and terror the aspect of a strange people; their long hair, which hung in tresses down their backs, was gracefully bound with ribbons, but the rest of their habit appeared to imitate the fashion of the Huns. When they were admitted to the audience of Justinian, Candish, the first of the ambassadors, addressed the Roman emperor in these terms: "You see before you, O mighty prince, the representatives of the strongest and most populous of nations, the invincible, the irresistible Avars. We are willing to devote ourselves to your service, we are able to vanquish and destroy all the enemies who now disturb your repose. But we expect, as the price of our alliance, as the reward of our valour, precious gifts, annual subsidies, and fruitful possessions."

At the time of this embassy Justinian had reigned above thirty, he had lived above seventy-five years; his mind, as well as his body, was feeble and languid; and the conqueror of Africa and Italy, careless of the permanent interest of his people, aspired only to end his days in the bosom even of inglorious peace. In a studied oration, he imparted to the senate his resolution to dissemble the insult and to purchase the friendship of the Avars; and the whole senate, like the mandarins of China, applauded the incomparable wisdom and foresight of their sovereign. The instruments of luxury were immediately prepared to captivate the barbarians; silken garments, soft and splendid beds, and chains and collars encrusted with gold. The ambassadors, content with such liberal reception, departed from Constantinople, and Valentin, one of the emperor's guards, was sent with a similar character to their camp at the foot of Mount Caucasus. As their destruction or their success must be alike advantageous to the empire, he persuaded them to invade the enemies of Rome; and they were easily tempted, by gifts and promises, to gratify their ruling inclinations. These fugitives, who fled before the Turkish arms, passed the Tanais and Borysthenes, and boldly advanced into the heart of Poland and Germany, violating the law of nations and abusing the rights of victory.

Before ten years had elapsed, their camps were seated on the Danube and the Elbe, many Bulgarian and Slavonian names were obliterated from the earth, and the remainder of their tribes are found, as tributaries and vassals, under the standard of the Avars. The chagan, the peculiar title of their king, still affected to cultivate the friendship of the emperor; and Justinian entertained some thoughts of fixing them in Pannonia, to balance the prevailing power of the Lombards. But the virtue or treachery of an Avar betrayed the secret enmity and ambitious designs of their countrymen; and they loudly complained of the timid, though jealous, policy of detaining their ambassadors, and denying the arms which they had been allowed to purchase in the capital of the empire.

Perhaps the apparent change in the dispositions of the emperors may be ascribed to the embassy which was received from the conquerors of the Avars. The immense distance, which eluded their arms, could not extinguish their resentment; the Turkish ambassadors pursued the footsteps of

the vanquished to the Jaik, the Volga, Mount Caucasus, the Euxine, and Constantinople, and at length appeared before the successor of Constantine, to request that he would not espouse the cause of rebels and fugitives. The emperor renounced, or seemed to renounce, the fugitive Avars, but he accepted the alliance of the Turks; and the ratification of the treaty was carried by a Roman minister to the foot of Mount Altai. Under the successors of Justinian, the friendship of the two nations was cultivated by frequent and cordial intercourse.[c]

## RELATIONS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE WITH PERSIA

The Asiatic frontier of the Roman Empire was less favourable for attack than defence. The range of the Caucasus was occupied, as it still is, by a cluster of small nations of various languages, strongly attached to their independence, which the nature of their country enabled them to maintain amidst the wars and conflicting negotiations of the Romans, Persians, and Huns, by whom they were surrounded. The kingdom of Colchis (Mingrelia) was in permanent alliance with the Romans, and the sovereign received a regular investiture from the emperor. The Tzans, who inhabited the mountains about the sources of the Phasis, enjoyed a subsidiary alliance with Justinian until their plundering expeditions within the precincts of the empire induced him to garrison their country. Iberia, to the east of Colchis, the modern Georgia, formed an independent kingdom under the protection of Persia.

Armenia, as an independent kingdom, had long formed a slight counterpoise between the Roman and Persian empires. In the reign of Theodosius II it had been partitioned by its powerful neighbours; and about the year 429, it had lost the shadow of independence which it had been allowed to retain. The greater part of Armenia had fallen to the share of the Persians; but as the people were Christians, and possessed their own church and literature, they had maintained their nationality uninjured after the loss of their political government. The western or Roman part of Armenia was bounded by the mountains in which the Araxes, the Boas, and the Euphrates take their rise; and it was defended against Persia by the fortress of Theodosiopolis (Erzerum), situated on the very frontier of Pers-Armenia. From Theodosiopolis the empire was bounded by ranges of mountains which cross the Euphrates and extend to the river Nymphæus, and here the city of Martyropolis, the capital of Roman Armenia, east of the Euphrates, was situated. From the junction of the Nymphæus with the Tigris the frontier again followed the mountains to Dara, and from thence it proceeded to the Chaboras and the fortress of Circesium.

The Arabs or Saracens, who inhabited the district between Circesium and Idumæa, were divided into two kingdoms: that of Ghassan, towards Syria, maintained an alliance with the Romans; and that of Hira, to the east, enjoyed the protection of Persia. Palmyra, which had fallen into ruins after the time of Theodosius II, was repaired and garrisoned; and the country between the gulfs of Ailath and Suez, forming a province called the Third Palestine, was protected by a fortress constructed at the foot of Mount Sinai, and occupied by a strong body of troops.

Such a frontier, though it presented great difficulties in the way of invading Persia, afforded admirable means for protecting the empire; and accordingly it had very rarely indeed happened that a Persian army had ever

penetrated into a Roman province. It was reserved for Justinian's reign to behold the Persians break through the defensive line, and contribute to the ruin of the wealth and the destruction of the civilisation of some of the most flourishing and enlightened portions of the Eastern Empire. The wars which Justinian carried on with Persia reflect little glory on his reign; but the celebrated name of his rival, the great Chosroes Nushirvan, has rendered his misfortunes and misconduct venial in the eyes of historians.

The Persian and Roman empires were at this time nearly equal in power and civilisation; both were ruled by princes whose reigns form national epochs, yet history affords ample evidence that the brilliant exploits of both these sovereigns were effected by a wasteful expenditure of the national resources and by a consumption of the lives and capital of their subjects which proved irreparable. Neither empire was ever able to regain its former state of prosperity, nor could society recover the shock which it had received. The governments were too demoralised to venture on political reforms, and the people too ignorant and too feeble to attempt a national revolution.

The governments of declining countries often give but slight signs of their weaknesses and approaching dissolution as long as the ordinary relations of war and peace require to be maintained only with habitual friends or enemies, though the slightest exertion, created by extraordinary circumstances, may cause the political fabric to fall to pieces. The armies of the Eastern Empire and of Persia had, by long acquaintance with the military force of one another, found the means of balancing any peculiar advantage of their enemy by a modification of tactics, or by an improvement in military discipline, which neutralised its effect. War between the two states was consequently carried on according to a regular routine of service, and was continued during a succession of campaigns in which much blood and treasure were expended, and much glory gained, with very little change in the relative military power, and none in the frontiers, of the two empires.

The avarice of Justinian, or his inconstant plans, often induced him to leave the eastern frontier of the empire very inadequately garrisoned; and this frontier presented an extent of country against which a Persian army, concentrated behind the Tigris, could choose its point of attack. The option of carrying the war into Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, or Colchis generally lay with the Persians; and Chosroes attempted to penetrate into the empire by every portion of this frontier during his long wars. The Roman army, in spite of the change which had taken place in its arms and organisation, still retained its superiority.[b]

The first war with the Persians had followed close upon Justinian's accession. He had sent Belisarius to build a fortress near Nisibis in 528; the Persians under Prince Xerxes invaded Mesopotamia and defeated the Romans with heavy loss. The next year was devoted to raids by both sides, but in 530 Belisarius, then only twenty-five, won a victory at Daras. "This being," says Procopius,[d] "the first defeat suffered by the Persians for a long time." The next year, however, at Callinicum, Belisarius was badly defeated, and while Procopius, his secretary, says he fought bravely, Johannes Malalas[n] accuses him of cowardice. At any rate he was recalled, and his successor Mundus won some glory. Then the old King Kobad died and his famous son Chosroes I. came to the Persian throne.[a]

And now the war in which Justinian had found the empire engaged on his succession was terminated by a peace called "the Everlasting Peace," which the Romans purchased by the payment of eleven thousand pounds of gold to Chosroes. The Persian monarch required peace to regulate the

affairs of his own kingdom; and the calculation of Justinian that the sum which he paid to Persia was much less than the expense of continuing the war, though correct, was injudicious, as it really conveyed an admission of inferiority and weakness. Justinian's object had been to place the great body of his military forces at liberty, in order to direct his exclusive attention to recovering the lost provinces of the Western Empire. Had he availed himself of peace with Persia to diminish the burdens on his subjects, and consolidate the defence of the empire instead of extending its frontiers, he might perhaps have re-established the Roman power. As soon as Chosroes heard of the conquests of Justinian in Africa, Sicily, and Italy, his jealousy induced him to renew the war. The solicitations of an embassy sent by Witiges are said to have had some effect in determining him to take up arms.

A PERSIAN NOBLE
(Based on Bardon)

In 540 Chosroes invaded Syria with a powerful army, and laid siege to Antioch, the second city of the empire in population and wealth. He offered to raise the siege on receiving payment of one thousand pounds' weight of gold, but this small sum was refused. Antioch was taken by storm, its buildings were committed to the flames, and its inhabitants were carried away captive and settled as colonists in Persia. Hierapolis, Berœa (Aleppo), Apamea, and Chalcis escaped this fate by paying the ransom demanded from each. To save Syria from utter destruction, Belisarius was sent to take the command of an army assembled for its defence, but he was ill supported, and his success was by no means brilliant. The fact that he saved Syria from utter devastation, nevertheless, rendered his campaign of 543 by no means unimportant for the empire.[b]

In 545 a truce for five years was signed, Justinian paying two thousand pounds of gold. In 549 the Romans yielded to the appeal of the Lazi and sent troops to aid them to shake off the Persian yoke. After various sieges, a new truce was concluded in 551, the Romans paying twenty-six hundred pounds of gold. Hostilities went on, none the less, with a result, as Bury[c] notes, that the Persians failed of their design to gain access to the Euxine, and "that on the waters of the sea the Romans were to remain without rivals." The Romans had, however, to pay, as usual, the price.[a] The war had been carried on for twenty years, but during the latter period of its duration military operations had been confined to Colchis. It was terminated in 562 by a truce for fifty years, which effected little change in the frontiers of the empire. The most remarkable clause of this treaty of peace imposed on Justinian the disgraceful obligation of paying Chosroes an annual subsidy of thirty thousand pieces of gold [£18,750 sterling]; and he was compelled immediately to advance the sum of 210,000 pounds, for seven

years. The sum, it is true, was not very great, but the condition of the Roman Empire was sadly changed, when it became necessary to purchase peace from all its neighbours with gold, and with gold to find mercenary troops to carry on its wars. The moment, therefore, a supply of gold failed in the imperial treasury, the safety of the Roman power was compromised.

The weakness of the Roman Empire, and the necessity of finding allies in the East, in order to secure a share of the lucrative commerce of which Persia had long possessed a monopoly, induced Justinian to keep up friendly communications with the king of Ethiopia (Abyssinia). Elesboas, who then occupied the Ethiopian throne, was a prince of great power, and a steady ally of the Romans. The wars of this Christian monarch in Arabia are related by the historians of the empire; and Justinian endeavoured, by this means, to transfer the silk trade with India from Persia to the route by the Red Sea.

The attempt failed from the great length of the sea voyage, and the difficulties of adjusting the intermediate commerce of the countries on this line of communication; but still the trade of the Red Sea was so great that the king of Ethiopia, in the reign of Justin, was able to collect a fleet of seven hundred native vessels, and six hundred Roman and Persian merchantmen, which he employed to transport his troops into Arabia.[b]

## THE REVOLT IN AFRICA

The review of the nations from the Danube to the Nile has exposed on every side the weakness of the Romans; and our wonder is reasonably excited that they should presume to enlarge an empire, whose ancient limits they were incapable of defending. But the wars, the conquests, and the triumphs of Justinian are the feeble and pernicious efforts of old age, which exhaust the remains of strength and accelerate the decay of the powers of life. He exulted in the glorious act of restoring Africa and Italy to the republic; but the calamities which followed the departure of Belisarius betrayed the impotence of the conqueror and accomplished the ruin of those unfortunate countries.

From his new acquisitions, Justinian expected that his avarice, as well as pride, should be richly gratified. A rapacious minister of the finances closely pursued the footsteps of Belisarius; and as the old registers of tribute had been burned by the Vandals, he indulged his fancy in a liberal calculation and arbitrary assessment of the wealth of Africa. The increase of taxes, which were drawn away by a distant sovereign, and a general resumption of the patrimony or crown lands soon dispelled the intoxication of the public joy; but the emperor was insensible to the modest complaints of the people, till he was awakened and alarmed by the clamours of military discontent. Many of the Roman soldiers had married the widows and daughters of the Vandals. As their own, by the double right of conquest and inheritance, they claimed the estates which Genseric had assigned to his victorious troops. They heard with disdain the cold and selfish representations of their officers that the liberality of Justinian had raised them from a savage or servile condition; that they were already enriched by the spoils of Africa, the treasure, the slaves, and the movables of the vanquished barbarians; and that the ancient and lawful patrimony of the emperors would be applied only to the support of that government on which their own safety and reward must ultimately depend.

[535-545 A.D.]

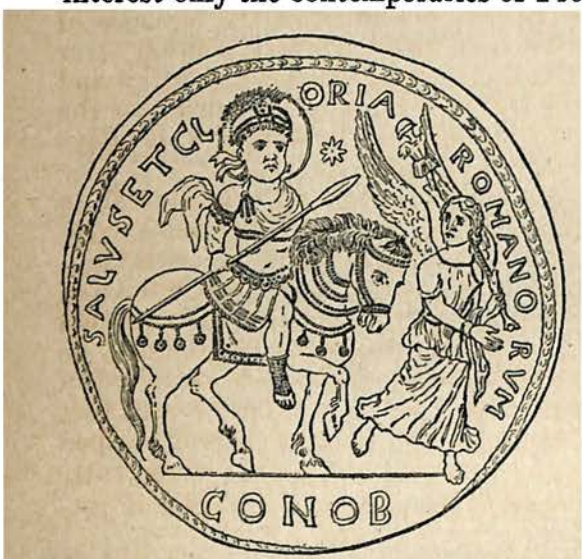
The mutiny was secretly inflamed by a thousand soldiers, for the most part Heruli, who had imbibed the doctrines and were instigated by the clergy of the Arian sect; and the cause of perjury and rebellion was sanctified by the dispensing powers of fanaticism. The Arians deplored the ruin of their church, triumphant above a century in Africa; and they were justly provoked by the laws of the conqueror, which interdicted the baptism of their children and the exercise of all religious worship. Of the Vandals chosen by Belisarius, the far greater part, in the honours of the eastern service, forgot their country and religion. But a generous band of four hundred obliged the mariners, when they were in sight of the isle of Lesbos, to alter their course; they touched on Peloponnesus, ran ashore on a desert coast of Africa, and boldly erected on Mount Aurasius the standard of independence and revolt.

While the troops of the province disclaimed the commands of their superiors, a conspiracy was formed at Carthage against the life of Solomon, who filled with honour the place of Belisarius; and the Arians had piously resolved to sacrifice the tyrant at the foot of the altar, during the awful mysteries of the festival of Easter. Fear or remorse restrained the daggers of the assassins, but the patience of Solomon emboldened their discontent; and at the end of ten days a furious sedition was kindled in the circus, which desolated Africa above ten years. The pillage of the city and the indiscriminate slaughter of its inhabitants were suspended only by darkness, sleep, and intoxication; the governor, with seven companions, among whom was the historian Procopius, escaped to Sicily. Two-thirds of the army were involved in the guilt of treason; and eight thousand insurgents, assembling in the fields of Bulla, elected Stozas for their chief, a private soldier who possessed, in a superior degree, the virtues of a rebel. Under the mask of freedom, his eloquence could lead, or at least impel, the passions of his equals. He raised himself to a level with Belisarius and the nephew of the emperor, by daring to encounter them in the field; and the victorious generals were compelled to acknowledge that Stozas deserved a purer cause and a more legitimate command. Vanquished in battle, he dexterously employed the arts of negotiation; a Roman army was seduced from their allegiance, and the chiefs, who had trusted to his faithless promise, were murdered by his order in a church of Numidia.

When every resource, either of force or perfidy, was exhausted, Stozas with some desperate Vandals retired to the wilds of Mauretania, obtained the daughter of a barbarian prince, and eluded the pursuit of his enemies by the report of his death. The personal weight of Belisarius, the rank, the spirit, and the temper of Germanus, the emperor's nephew, and the vigour and success of the second administration of the eunuch Solomon, restored the modesty of the camp, and maintained, for a while, the tranquillity of Africa. But the vices of the Byzantine court were felt in that distant province; the troops complained that they were neither paid nor relieved; and as soon as the public disorders were sufficiently mature, Stozas was again alive, in arms, and at the gates of Carthage. He fell in a single combat, but he smiled in the agonies of death, when he was informed that his own javelin had reached the heart of his antagonist.

The example of Stozas, and the assurance that a fortunate soldier had been the first king, encouraged the ambition of Gontharis, and he promised by a private treaty to divide Africa with the Moors, if, with their dangerous aid, he should ascend the throne of Carthage. The feeble Areobindus, unskilled in the affairs of peace and war, was raised by his marriage with the

niece of Justinian to the office of exarch. He was suddenly oppressed by a sedition of the guards; and his abject supplications, which provoked the contempt, could not move the pity, of the inexorable tyrant. After a reign of thirty days, Gontharis himself was stabbed at a banquet, by the hand of Artaban; and it is singular enough that an Armenian prince, of the royal family of Arsaces, should re-establish at Carthage the authority of the Roman Empire. In the conspiracy which unsheathed the dagger of Brutus against the life of Cæsar, every circumstance is curious and important to the eyes of posterity; but the guilt or merit of these loyal or rebellious assassins could interest only the contemporaries of Procopius, who, by their hopes and fears, their friendship or resentment, were personally engaged in the revolutions of Africa.



GOLD MEDALLION OF JUSTINIAN

That country was rapidly sinking into the state of barbarism, from whence it had been raised by the Phœnician colonies and Roman laws; and every step of intestine discord was marked by some deplorable victory of savage man over civilised society. The Moors, though ignorant of justice, were impatient of oppression; their vagrant life and boundless wilderness disappointed the arms and eluded the chains of a conqueror, and experience had shown that neither oaths nor obligations could secure the fidelity of their attachment. The victory of Mount Aurasius had awed them into momentary submission; but if they respected the character of Solomon, they hated and despised the pride and luxury of his two nephews, Cyrus and Sergius, on whom their uncle had imprudently bestowed the provincial governments of Tripolis and Pentapolis.

A Moorish tribe encamped under the walls of Leptis, to renew their alliance, and receive from the governor the customary gifts. Fourscore of their deputies were introduced as friends into the city; but, on the dark suspicion of a conspiracy, they were massacred at the table of Sergius; and the clamour of arms and revenge was re-echoed through the valleys of Mount Atlas, from both the Syrtes to the Atlantic Ocean. A personal injury, the unjust execution or murder of his brother, rendered Antalas the enemy of the Romans. The defeat of the Vandals had formerly signalised his valour; the rudiments of justice and prudence were still more conspicuous in a Moor; and while he laid Hadrumetum in ashes, he calmly admonished the emperor that the peace of Africa might be secured by the recall of Solomon and his unworthy nephews. The exarch led forth his troops from Carthage; but at the distance of six days' journey, in the neighbourhood of Tebeste,[1] he was astonished by the superior numbers and fierce aspect of the barbarians. He proposed a treaty, solicited a reconciliation, and offered to bind himself by the most solemn oaths. "By what oaths can he bind himself?" interrupted the indignant Moors. "Will he swear by the Gospels, the divine books of the

[1 Now Tibesh in Algiers.]

Christians? It was on those books that the faith of his nephew Sergius was pledged to eighty of our innocent and unfortunate brethren. Before we trust them a second time, let us try their efficacy in the chastisement of perjury, and the vindication of their own honour." Their honour was vindicated in the field of Tebeste, by the death of Solomon and the total loss of his army.

The arrival of fresh troops and more skilful commanders[1] soon checked the insolence of the Moors; seventeen of their princes were slain in the same battle; and the doubtful and transient submission of their tribes was celebrated with lavish applause by the people of Constantinople. Successive inroads had reduced the province of Africa to one-third of the measure of Italy; yet the Roman emperors continued to reign above a century over Carthage and the fruitful coast of the Mediterranean. But the victories and the losses of Justinian were alike pernicious to mankind; and such was the desolation of Africa that in many parts a stranger might wander whole days without meeting the face either of a friend or an enemy.

The nation of the Vandals had disappeared; they once amounted to 160,000 warriors, without including the children, the women, or the slaves. Their numbers were infinitely surpassed by the number of the Moorish families extirpated in a relentless war; and the same destruction was retaliated on the Romans and their allies, who perished by the climate, their mutual quarrels, and the rage of the barbarians. When Procopius first landed, he admired the populousness of the cities and country, strenuously exercised in the labours of commerce and agriculture. In less than twenty years, that busy scene was converted into a silent solitude; the wealthy citizens escaped to Sicily and Constantinople; and the secret historian has confidently affirmed that five millions of Africans were consumed by the wars and government of the emperor Justinian.

## INVASION OF THE COTRIGUR HUNS

The repose of the aged Belisarius was crowned by a last victory which saved the emperor and the capital. The barbarians who annually visited the provinces of Europe were less discouraged by some accidental defeat than they were excited by the double hope of spoil and of subsidy.

In the thirty-second winter of Justinian's reign, the Danube was deeply frozen; Zabergan led the cavalry of the Cotrigur (or Cotugur) Huns, and his standard was followed by a promiscuous multitude. The savage chief passed, without opposition, the river and the mountains, spread his troops over Macedonia and Thrace, and advanced with no more than seven thousand horse to the long walls which should have defended the territory of Constantinople. But the works of man are impotent against the assaults of nature; a recent earthquake had shaken the foundations of the wall, and

[1 "The glory of Belisarius deserves to be contrasted with the oblivion which has covered the exploits of Johannes the Patrician, one of the ablest generals of Justinian. This experienced general assumed the command in Africa when the province had fallen into a state of great disorder; the inhabitants were exposed to a dangerous coalition of the Moors, and the Roman army was in such a state of destitution that their leader was compelled to import the necessary provisions for his troops. Though Johannes defeated the Moors, and restored prosperity to the province, his name is almost forgotten. His actions and talents only affected the interests of the Byzantine Empire, and prolonged the existence of the Roman province of Africa; they exerted no influence on the fate of any of the European nations whose history has been the object of study in modern times, so that they were utterly forgotten when the discovery of the poetry of Corippus, one of the last and worst of the Roman poets, rescued them from complete oblivion." — FINLAY.b]

the forces of the empire were employed on the distant frontiers of Italy, Africa, and Persia. The seven schools, or companies of the guards or domestic troops, had been augmented to the number of fifty-five hundred men, whose ordinary station was in the peaceful cities of Asia. But the places of the brave Armenians were insensibly supplied by lazy citizens, who purchased an exemption from the duties of civil life, without being exposed to the dangers of military service. Of such soldiers, few could be tempted to sally from the gates; and none could be persuaded to remain in the field unless they wanted strength and speed to escape from the Cotrigurs.

The report of the fugitives exaggerated the numbers and fierceness of an enemy who had polluted holy virgins and abandoned new-born infants to the dogs and vultures;[1] a crowd of rustics, imploring food and protection, increased the consternation of the city, and the tents of Zabergan were pitched at the distance of twenty miles, on the banks of a small river which encircles Melanthias, and afterwards falls into the Propontis. Justinian trembled; and those who had only seen the emperor in his old age, were pleased to suppose that he had lost the alacrity and vigour of his youth. By his command, the vessels of gold and silver were removed from the churches in the neighbourhood and even the suburbs of Constantinople; the ramparts were lined with trembling spectators; the golden gate was crowded with useless generals and tribunes, and the senate shared the fatigues and the apprehensions of the populace.

But the eyes of the prince and people were directed to a feeble veteran, who was compelled by the public danger to resume the armour in which he had entered Carthage and defended Rome. The horses of the royal stables, of private citizens, and even of the circus, were hastily collected; the emulation of the old and young was roused by the name of Belisarius, and his first encampment was in the presence of a victorious enemy. His prudence, and the labour of the friendly peasants, secured with a ditch and rampart the repose of the night; innumerable fires and clouds of dust were artfully contrived to magnify the opinion of his strength; his soldiers suddenly passed from despondency to presumption, and while ten thousand voices demanded the battle, Belisarius dissembled his knowledge that in the hour of trial he must depend on the firmness of three hundred veterans.

The next morning the Cotrigur cavalry advanced to the charge. But they heard the shouts of multitudes, they beheld the arms and discipline of the front; they were assaulted on the flanks by two ambuscades which rose from the woods; their foremost warriors fell by the hand of the aged hero and his guards; and the swiftness of their evolutions was rendered useless by the close attack and rapid pursuit of the Romans. In this action (so speedy was their flight) the Cotrigur Huns lost only four hundred horse; but Constantinople was saved; and Zabergan, who felt the hand of a master, withdrew to a respectful distance. But his friends were numerous in the councils of the emperor, and Belisarius obeyed with reluctance the commands of envy and Justinian, which forbade him to achieve the deliverance of his country.

On his return to the city, the people, still conscious of their danger, accompanied his triumph with acclamations of joy and gratitude, which were imputed as a crime to the victorious general. But when he entered the palace the courtiers were silent, and the emperor, after a cold and thankless embrace, dismissed him to mingle with the train of slaves. Yet so deep was

[1 "As if," comments Agathias,*o* "this alone had been the purpose of their appearance in the world."]

[559-563 A.D.]

the impression of his glory on the minds of men that Justinian, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, was encouraged to advance near forty miles from the capital, and to inspect in person the restoration of the long wall. The Cotrigurs wasted the summer in the plains of Thrace; but they were inclined to peace by the failure of their rash attempts on Greece and the Chersonesus. A menace of killing their prisoners quickened the payment of heavy ransoms; and the departure of Zabergan was hastened by the report that double-prowed vessels were built on the Danube to intercept his passage. The danger was soon forgotten; and a vain question, whether their sovereign had shown more wisdom or weakness, amused the idleness of the city.

### END OF BELISARIUS

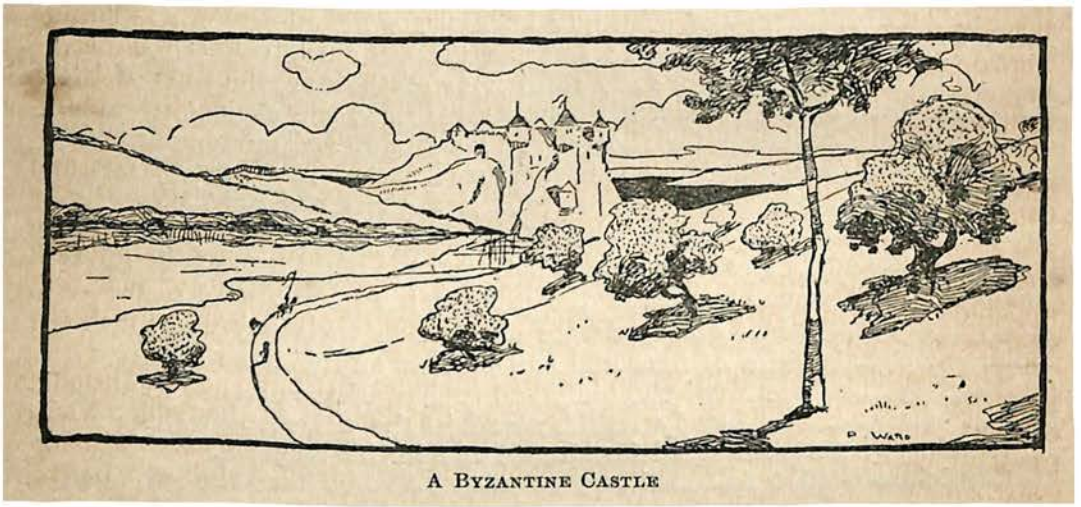
About two years after the last victory of Belisarius, the emperor returned from a Thracian journey of health, or business, or devotion. Justinian was afflicted by a pain in his head; and his private entry countenanced the rumour of his death. Before the third hour of the day, the bakers' shops were plundered of their bread, the houses were shut, and every citizen, with hope or terror, prepared for the impending tumult. The senators themselves, fearful and suspicious, were convened at the ninth hour; and the prefect received their commands to visit every quarter of the city, and proclaim a general illumination for the recovery of the emperor's health. The ferment subsided, but every accident betrayed the impotence of the government and the factious temper of the people; the guards were disposed to mutiny as often as their quarters were changed or their pay was withheld; the frequent calamities of fires and earthquakes afforded the opportunities of disorder; the disputes of the blues and greens, of the orthodox and heretics, degenerated into bloody battles; and in the presence of the Persian ambassador, Justinian blushed for himself and for his subjects.

Capricious pardon and arbitrary punishment embittered the irksomeness and discontent of a long reign; a conspiracy was formed in the palace; and unless we are deceived by the names of Marcellus and Sergius, the most virtuous and the most profligate of the courtiers were associated in the same designs. They had fixed the time of the execution; their rank gave them access to the royal banquet; and their black slaves were stationed in the vestibule and porticoes, to announce the death of the tyrant and to excite a sedition in the capital. But the indiscretion of an accomplice saved the poor remnant of the days of Justinian. The conspirators were detected and seized, with daggers hidden under their garments; Marcellus died by his own hand, and Sergius was dragged from the sanctuary. Pressed by remorse, or tempted by the hopes of safety, he accused two officers of the household of Belisarius; and torture forced them to declare that they had acted according to the secret instructions of their patron.

Posterity will not hastily believe that a hero who, in the vigour of life, had disdained the fairest offers of ambition and revenge, would stoop to the murder of his prince whom he could not long expect to survive. His followers were impatient to fly; but flight must have been supported by rebellion, and he had lived enough for nature and for glory. Belisarius appeared before the council with less fear than indignation. After forty years' service, the emperor had prejudged his guilt; and injustice was sanctified by the presence and authority of the patriarch. The life of Belisarius was graciously spared; but his fortunes were sequestered, and from December to

July he was guarded as a prisoner in his own palace. At length his innocence was acknowledged; his freedom and honours were restored; and death, which might be hastened by resentment and grief, removed him from the world about eight months after his deliverance (March, 565).

The name of Belisarius can never die; but instead of the funeral, the monuments, the statues so justly due to his memory, it appears that his treasure, the spoils of the Goths and Vandals, were immediately confiscated by the emperor. Some decent portion was reserved, however, for the use of his widow; and as Antonina had much to repent, she devoted the last remains of her life and fortune to the foundation of a convent. Such is the simple and genuine narrative of the fall of Belisarius and the ingratitude of Justinian. That he was deprived of his eyes, and reduced by envy to beg his bread — "Give a penny to Belisarius the general!" — is a fiction of later times, which has obtained credit, or rather favour, as a strange example of the vicissitudes of fortune.



A Byzantine Castle

## DEATH OF JUSTINIAN

If the emperor could rejoice in the death of Belisarius, he enjoyed the base satisfaction only eight months, the last period of a reign of thirty-eight and a life of eighty-three years. It would be difficult to trace the character of a prince who is not the most conspicuous object of his own times; but the confessions of an enemy may be received as the safest evidence of his virtues. The resemblance of Justinian to the bust of Domitian is maliciously urged; with the acknowledgment, however, of a well-proportioned figure, a ruddy complexion, and a pleasing countenance.

The emperor was easy of access, patient of hearing, courteous and affable in discourse, and a master of the angry passions which rage with such destructive violence in the breast of a despot. Procopius[p] praises his temper, to reproach him with calm and deliberate cruelty; but in the conspiracies which attacked his authority and person, a more candid judge will approve the justice, or admire the clemency, of Justinian. He excelled in the private virtues of chastity and temperance; but the impartial love of beauty would have been less mischievous than his conjugal tenderness for Theodora, and his abstemious diet was regulated not by the prudence of a philosopher but the superstition of a monk. His repasts were short and frugal; on solemn

fasts he contented himself with water and vegetables; and such was his strength, as well as fervour, that he frequently passed two days and as many nights without tasting any food. The measure of his sleep was not less rigorous; after the repose of a single hour, the body was awakened by the soul, and, to the astonishment of his chamberlains, Justinian walked or studied till the morning light. Such restless application prolonged his time for the acquisition of knowledge and the despatch of business; and he might seriously deserve the reproach of confounding, by minute and preposterous diligence, the general order of his administration.

The emperor professed himself a musician and architect, a poet and philosopher, a lawyer and theologian; and if he failed in the enterprise of reconciling the Christian sects, the review of the Roman jurisprudence is a noble monument of his spirit and industry. In the government of the empire, he was less wise or less successful. The age was unfortunate; the people was oppressed and discontented; Theodora abused her power; a succession of bad ministers disgraced his judgment; and Justinian was neither beloved in his life nor regretted at his death. The love of fame was deeply implanted in his breast, but he condescended to the poor ambition of titles, honours, and contemporary praise; and while he laboured to fix the admiration, he forfeited the esteem and affection of the Romans.

The design of the African and Italian wars was boldly conceived and executed; and his penetration discovered the talents of Belisarius in the camp, of Narses in the palace. But the name of the emperor is eclipsed by the names of his victorious generals; and Belisarius still lives, to upbraid the envy and ingratitude of his sovereign. The partial favour of mankind applauds the genius of a conqueror who leads and directs his subjects in the exercise of arms.

The characters of Philip II and of Justinian are distinguished by the cold ambition which delights in war and declines the dangers of the field. Yet a colossal statue of bronze represented the emperor on horseback preparing to march against the Persians in the habit and armour of Achilles. In the great square before the church of St. Sophia, this monument was raised on a brass column and a stone pedestal of seven steps; and the pillar of Theodosius, which weighed seventy-four hundred pounds of silver, was removed from the same place by the avarice and vanity of Justinian. Future princes were more just or indulgent to his memory; the elder Andronicus, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, repaired and beautified his equestrian statue; since the fall of the empire it has been melted into cannon by the victorious Turks.

### JUSTINIAN AS A LEGISLATOR

The vain titles of the victories of Justinian are crumbled into dust; but the name of the legislator is inscribed on a fair and everlasting monument. Under his reign, and by his care, the civil jurisprudence was digested in the immortal works of the *Code*, the *Pandects*, and the *Institutions*: the public reason of the Romans has been silently or studiously transfused into the domestic institutions of Europe, and the laws of Justinian still command the respect or obedience of independent nations. Wise or fortunate is the prince who connects his own reputation with the honour and interest of a perpetual order of men. The defence of their founder is the first cause which in every age had exercised the zeal and industry of the civilians. They piously commemorate his virtues, dissemble or deny his failings, and

fiercely chastise the guilt or folly of the rebels who presume to sully the majesty of the purple. The idolatry of love has provoked, as it usually happens, the rancour of opposition; the character of Justinian has been exposed to the blind vehemence of flattery and invective, and the injustice of a sect (the anti-Tribonians) has refused all praise and merit to the prince, his ministers, and his laws.

When Justinian ascended the throne, the reformation of the Roman jurisprudence was an arduous but indispensable task. In the space of ten centuries, the infinite variety of laws and legal opinions had filled many thousand volumes, which no fortune could purchase and no capacity could digest. Books could not easily be found; and the judges, poor in the midst of riches, were reduced to the exercise of their illiterate discretion. The subjects of the Greek provinces were ignorant of the language that disposed of their lives and properties; and the barbarous dialect of the Latins was imperfectly studied in the academies of Berytus and Constantinople. As an Illyrian soldier, that idiom was familiar to the infancy of Justinian; his youth had been instructed by the lessons of jurisprudence, and his imperial choice selected the most learned civilians of the East to labour with their sovereign in the work of reformation. The theory of professors was assisted by the practice of advocates and the experience of magistrates; and the whole undertaking was animated by the spirit of Tribonian. This extraordinary man, the object of so much praise and censure, was a native of Side in Pamphilia; and his genius, like that of Bacon, embraced, as his own, all the business and knowledge of the age.

In the first year of his reign, Justinian directed the faithful Tribonian, and nine learned associates, to revise the ordinances of his predecessors, as they were contained, since the time of Hadrian, in the Gregorian, Hermogenian, and Theodosian codes; to purge the errors and contradictions, to retrench whatever was obsolete or superfluous, and to select the wise and salutary laws best adapted to the practice of the tribunals and the use of his subjects. The work was accomplished in fourteen months; and the twelve books or tables, which the new decemvirs produced, might be designed to imitate the labours of their Roman predecessors. The new *Code* of Justinian was honoured with his name, and confirmed by his royal signature; authentic transcripts were multiplied by the pens of notaries and scribes. A more arduous operation was still behind — to extract the spirit of jurisprudence from the decisions and conjectures, the questions and disputes, of the Roman civilians. Seventeen lawyers, with Tribonian at their head, were appointed by the emperor to exercise an absolute jurisdiction over the works of their predecessors. If they had obeyed his commands in ten years, Justinian would have been satisfied with their diligence; and the rapid composition of the *Digest of Pandects*, in three years, will deserve praise or censure, according to the merit of the execution. From the library of Tribonian, they chose forty, the most eminent civilians of former times; two thousand treatises were comprised in an abridgment of fifty books; and it has been carefully recorded that three millions of lines or sentences were reduced, in this abstract, to the moderate number of 150,000. The edition of this great work was delayed a month after that of the *Institutions;* and it seemed reasonable that the elements should precede the digest of the Roman law. As soon as the emperor had approved their labours, he ratified, by his legislative power, the speculations of these private citizens: their commentaries on the twelve tables, the perpetual edict, the laws of the people, and the decrees of the senate, succeeded to the authority of the text; and the text was

abandoned, as a useless, though venerable, relic of antiquity. The *Code*, the *Pandects*, and the *Institutions* were declared to be the legitimate system of civil jurisprudence; they alone were admitted in the tribunals, and they alone were taught in the academies of Rome, Constantinople, and Berytus. Justinian addressed to the senate and provinces his eternal oracles; and his pride, under the mask of piety, ascribed the consummation of this great design to the support and inspiration of the Deity.

Since the emperor declined the fame and envy of original composition, we can only require at his hands method, choice, and fidelity, the humble, though indispensable, virtues of a compiler. Among the various combinations of ideas, it is difficult to assign any reasonable preference; but as the order of Justinian is different in his three works, it is possible that all may be wrong; and it is certain that two cannot be right. In the selection of ancient laws, he seems to have viewed his predecessors without jealousy, and with equal regard: the series could not ascend above the reign of Hadrian, and the narrow distinction of paganism and Christianity, introduced by the superstition of Theodosius, had been abolished by the consent of mankind. But the jurisprudence of the *Pandects* is circumscribed within a period of a hundred years, from the perpetual edict to the death of Severus Alexander: the civilians who lived under the first Cæsars are seldom permitted to speak, and only three names can be attributed to the age of the republic. The favourite of Justinian (it has been fiercely urged) was fearful of encountering the light of freedom and the gravity of Roman sages. Tribonian condemned to oblivion the genuine and native wisdom of Cato, the Scævolas, and Sulpicius; while he invoked spirits more congenial to his own, the Syrians, Greeks, and Africans, who flocked to the imperial court to study Latin as a foreign tongue, and jurisprudence as a lucrative profession. But the ministers of Justinian were instructed to labour, not for the curiosity of antiquarians, but for the immediate benefit of his subjects. It was their duty to select the useful and practicable parts of the Roman law; and the writings of the old republicans, however curious or excellent, were no longer suited to the new system of manners, religion, and government. Perhaps, if the preceptors and friends of Cicero were still alive, our candour would acknowledge that, except in purity of language, their intrinsic merit was excelled by the school of Papinian and Ulpian. The science of the laws is the slow growth of time and experience, and the advantage both of method and materials is naturally assumed by the most recent authors. The civilians of the reign of the Antonines had studied the works of their predecessors: their philosophic spirit had mitigated the rigour of antiquity, simplified the forms of proceeding, and emerged from the jealousy and prejudice of the rival sects. The choice of the authorities that compose the *Pandects* depended on the judgment of Tribonian; but the power of his sovereign could not absolve him from the sacred obligations of truth and fidelity. As the legislator of the empire, Justinian might repeal the acts of the Antonines, or condemn as seditious the free principles which were maintained by the last of the Roman lawyers. But the existence of past facts is placed beyond the reach of despotism; and the emperor was guilty of fraud and forgery when he corrupted the integrity of their text, inscribed with their venerable names the words and ideas of his servile reign, and suppressed by the hand of power the pure and authentic copies of their sentiments. The changes and interpolations of Tribonian and his colleagues are excused by the pretence of uniformity: but their cares have been insufficient, and the antinomies, or contradictions, of the

*Code* and *Pandects* still exercise the patience and subtlety of modern civilians.

But the emperor was unable to fix his own inconstancy; and while he boasted of renewing the exchange of Diomede, of transmuting brass into gold, he discovered the necessity of purifying his gold from the mixture of baser alloy. Six years had not elapsed from the publication of the *Code*, before he condemned the imperfect attempt by a new and more accurate edition of the same work, which he enriched with two hundred of his own laws, and fifty decisions of the darkest and most intricate points of jurisprudence. Every year, or according to Procopius each day, of his long reign, was marked by some legal innovation. Many of his acts were rescinded by himself; many were rejected by his successors; many have been obliterated by time; but the number of sixteen edicts, and one hundred and sixty-eight novels has been admitted into the authentic body of the civil jurisprudence. In the opinion of a philosopher superior to the prejudices of his profession, these incessant, and for the most part trifling, alterations, can be only explained by the venal spirit of a prince who sold without shame his judgments and his laws.

Monarchs seldom condescend to become the preceptors of their subjects; and some praise is due to Justinian, by whose command an ample system was reduced to a short and elementary treatise. Among the various institutes of the Roman law, those of Caius were the most popular in the East and West; and their use may be considered as an evidence of their merit. They were selected by the imperial delegates, Tribonian, Theophilus, and Dorotheus; and the freedom and purity of the Antonines was encrusted with the coarser materials of a degenerate age. The same volume which introduced the youth of Rome, Constantinople, and Berytus to the gradual study of the *Code* and *Pandects*, is still precious to the historian, the philosopher, and the magistrate. The *Institutions* of Justinian are divided into four books: they proceed, with no contemptible method, from Persons to Things, and from Things to Actions; and the article of Private Wrongs is terminated by the principles of Criminal Law.[c]

The faults or merits of Justinian's system of laws belong to the lawyers entrusted with the execution of his project, but the honour of having commanded this work may be ascribed to the emperor alone. It is to be regretted that the position of an absolute sovereign is so liable to temptation from passing events, that Justinian himself could not refrain from injuring the surest monument of his fame, by later enactments, which mark too clearly that they emanated either from his own increasing avarice, or from weakness in yielding to the passions of his wife or courtiers.

It could not be expected that his political sagacity should have devised the means of securing the rights of his subjects against the arbitrary exercise of his own power; but he might have consecrated the great principle of equity, that legislation can never act as a retrospective decision; and he might have ordered his magistrates to adopt the oath of the Egyptian judges, who swore, when they entered an office, that they would never depart from the principles of equity (law), and that if the sovereign ordered them to do wrong, they would not obey. Justinian, however, was too much of a despot, and too little of a statesman, to proclaim the law, even while retaining the legislative power in his person, to be superior to the executive branch of the government.

But in maintaining that the laws of Justinian might have been rendered more perfect, and have been framed to confer greater benefits on mankind,

it is not to be denied that the work is one of the most remarkable monuments of human wisdom; and we should remember with gratitude, that for thirteen hundred years the Pandects served as the magazine or source of legal lore, and constitution of civil rights, to the Christian world, both in the East and in the West; and if it has now become an instrument of administrative tyranny in the continental monarchies of Europe, the fault is in the nations who refuse to follow out the principles of equity logically in regulating the dispensation of justice, and do not raise the law above the sovereign, nor render every minister and public servant amenable to the regular tribunals for every act he may commit in the exercise of his official duty, like the humblest citizen.

The government of Justinian's empire was Roman, its official language was Latin. Oriental habits and usages, as well as time and despotic power, had indeed introduced modifications in the old forms; but it would be an error to consider the imperial administration as having assumed a Greek character. The accident of the Greek language having become the ordinary dialect in use at court, and of the church in the Eastern Empire being deeply tinctured with Greek feelings, is apt to create an impression that the Eastern Empire had lost something of its Roman pride, in order to adopt a Greek character. The circumstance that its enemies often reproached it with being Greek, is a proof that the imputation was viewed as an insult. As the administration was entirely Roman, the laws of Justinian — the Code, the Pandects, and the Institutions — were published in Latin, though many of the later edicts (novels) were published in Greek. Nothing can illustrate in a stronger manner the artificial and anti-national position of the Eastern Roman Empire than this fact, that the Latin language was used in the promulgation of a system of laws for an empire, the language of whose church and literature was Greek. Latin was preserved in official business, and in public ceremonials, from feelings of pride connected with the ancient renown of the Romans and the dignity of the Roman Empire. So strong is the hold which antiquated custom maintains over the minds of men, that even a professed reformer, like Justinian, could not break through so irrational an usage as the publication of his laws in a language incomprehensible to most of those for whose use they were framed.

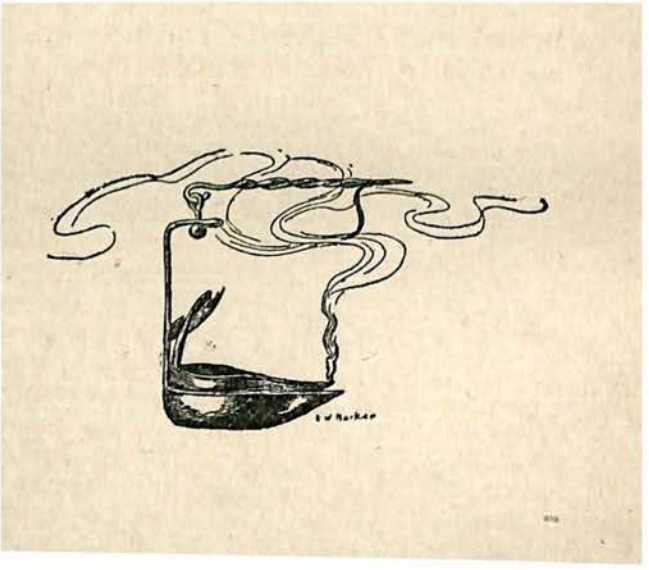
The laws and legislation of Justinian throw only an indistinct and vague light on the state of the Greek population. They were drawn entirely from Roman sources, calculated for a Roman state of society, and occupied with Roman forms and institutions. Justinian was so anxious to preserve them in all their purity that he adopted two measures to secure them from alteration. The copyists were commanded to refrain from any abridgment, and the commentators were ordered to follow the literal sense of the laws. All schools of law were likewise forbidden, except those of Constantinople, Rome, and Berytus, a regulation which must have been adopted to guard the Roman law from being corrupted by falling into the hands of Greek teachers, and becoming confounded with the customary law of the various Greek provinces. This restriction, and the importance attached to it by the emperor, prove that the Roman law was now the universal rule of conduct in the empire.

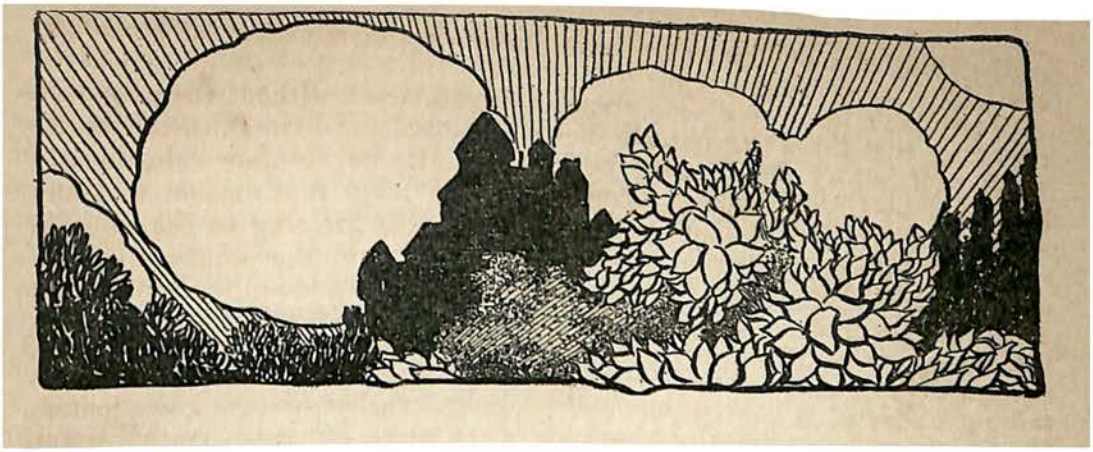
Justinian took every measure which prudence could dictate to secure the best and purest legal instruction and administration for the Roman tribunals; but only a small number of students could study in the licensed schools, and Rome, one of these schools, was, at the time of the publication of the law, in the hands of the Goths. It is therefore not surprising that a rapid decline

in the knowledge of Roman law commenced very shortly after the promulgation of Justinian's legislation.

Justinian's laws were soon translated into Greek without the emperor's requiring that these paraphrases should be literal; and Greek commentaries of an explanatory nature were published. His novels were subsequently published in Greek when the case required it; but it is evident that any remains of Greek laws and customs were rapidly yielding to the superior system of Roman legislation, perfected as this was by the judicious labours of Justinian's councillors. Some modifications were made in the jurisdiction of the judges and municipal magistrates at this time; and we must admit the testimony of Procopius as a proof that Justinian sold judicial offices, though the vagueness of the accusation does not afford us the means of ascertaining under what pretext the change in the earlier system was adopted. It is perhaps impossible to determine what share of authority the Greek municipal magistrates retained in the administration of justice and police, after the reforms effected by Justinian in their financial affairs, and the seizure of a large part of their local revenues. The existence of Greek corporations in Italy shows that they possessed an acknowledged existence in the Roman Empire.[b]

Summarising the accomplishments of Justinian, Bury[c] declares that the emperor won immortal fame in four departments: "in warfare, in law, in architecture, and in church history." The verdict is obviously just; but it is for his laws, rather than for his other achievements, that Justinian must be awarded the largest measure of gratitude by posterity.[a]





# CHAPTER V. REIGN OF JUSTIN II TO HERACLIUS

[565-629 A.D.]

DURING the last years of Justinian, his infirm mind was devoted to heavenly contemplation, and he neglected the business of the lower world. His subjects were impatient of the long continuance of his life and reign; yet all who were capable of reflection apprehended the moment of his death, which might involve the capital in tumult and the empire in civil war. Seven nephews of the childish monarch, the sons or grandsons of his brother and sister, had been educated in the splendour of a princely fortune; they had been shown in high commands to the provinces and armies; their characters were known, their followers were zealous, and as the jealousy of age postponed the declaration of a successor, they might expect with equal hopes the inheritance of their uncle. He expired in his palace after a reign of thirty-eight years; and the decisive opportunity was embraced by the friends of Justin, the son of Vigilantia.

At the hour of midnight, his domestics were awakened by an importunate crowd, who thundered at his door, and obtained admittance by revealing themselves to be the principal members of the senate. These welcome deputies announced the recent and momentous secret of the emperor's decease; reported, or perhaps invented, his dying choice of the best beloved and the most deserving of his nephews, and conjured Justin to prevent the disorders of the multitude, if they should perceive, with the return of light, that they were left without a master. After composing his countenance to surprise, sorrow, and decent modesty, Justin, by the advice of his wife Sophia, submitted to the authority of the senate. He was conducted with speed and silence to the palace; the guards saluted their new sovereign, and the martial and religious rites of his coronation were diligently accomplished. By the hands of the proper officers he was invested with the imperial garments, the red buskins, white tunic, and purple robe. A fortunate soldier, whom he instantly promoted to the rank of tribune, encircled his neck with a military collar; four robust youths exalted him on a shield; he stood firm and erect to receive the adoration of his subjects, and their choice was sanctified by the benediction of the patriarch, who imposed the diadem on the head of an orthodox prince.

The Hippodrome was already filled with innumerable multitudes; and no sooner did the emperor appear on his throne than the voices of the blue

and green factions were confounded in the same loyal acclamations. In the speeches which Justin addressed to the senate and people, he promised to correct the abuses which had disgraced the age of his predecessor, displayed the maxims of a just and beneficent government, and declared that, on the approaching calends of January, he would revive, in his own person, the name and liberality of a Roman consul. The immediate discharge of his uncle's debts exhibited a solid pledge of his faith and generosity; a train of porters laden with bags of gold advanced into the midst of the Hippodrome, and the hopeless creditors of Justinian accepted this equitable payment as a voluntary gift. Before the end of three years his example was imitated and surpassed by the empress Sophia, who delivered many indigent citizens from the weight of debt and usury; an act of benevolence the best entitled to gratitude, since it relieves the most intolerable distress, but in which the bounty of a prince is the most liable to be abused by the claims of prodigality and fraud.

On the seventh day of his reign Justin gave audience to the ambassadors of the Avars, and the scene was decorated to impress the barbarians with astonishment, veneration, and terror. The late emperor had cultivated, declared Targetius, the chief of the embassy, with annual and costly gifts, the friendship of a grateful monarch, and the enemies of Rome had respected the allies of the Avars. The same prudence would instruct the nephew of Justinian to imitate the liberality of his uncle, and to purchase the blessings of peace from an invincible people, who delighted and excelled in the exercise of war. The reply of the emperor was delivered in the same strain of haughty defiance, and he derived his confidence from the God of the Christians, the ancient glory of Rome, and the recent triumphs of Justinian. "The empire," said he, "abounds with men and horses, and arms sufficient to defend our frontiers and to chastise the barbarians. You offer aid, you threaten hostilities; we despise your enmity and your aid. The conquerors of the Avars solicit our alliance; shall we dread their fugitives and exiles? The bounty of our uncle was granted to your misery, to your humble prayers. From us you shall receive a more important obligation, the knowledge of your own weakness. Retire from our presence; the lives of ambassadors are safe; and if you return to implore our pardon, perhaps you will taste of our benevolence."[1]

On the report of his ambassadors, the chagan was awed by the apparent firmness of a Roman emperor, of whose character and resources he was ignorant. Instead of executing his threats against the Eastern Empire, he marched into the poor and savage countries of Germany, which were subject to the dominion of the Franks. After two doubtful battles, he consented to retire; and the Austrasian king relieved the distress of his camp with an immediate supply of corn and cattle. Such repeated disappointments had chilled the spirit of the Avars; and their power would have dissolved away in the Sarmatian desert, if the alliance of Alboin, king of the Lombards, had not given a new object to their arms, and a lasting settlement to their wearied fortunes.

The annals of the second Justin are marked with disgrace abroad and misery at home. In the West the Roman Empire was afflicted by the loss of Italy, the desolation of Africa, and the conquests of the Persians. Injustice prevailed both in the capital and the provinces; the rich trembled for their property, the poor for their safety, the ordinary magistrates were ignorant

[1 The account of this embassy is found in the poems of the African Corippus,[c] who described in Latin hexameters the circumstances of Justin's accession.]

[574 A.D.]

or venal, the occasional remedies appear to have been arbitrary and violent, and the complaints of the people could no longer be silenced by the splendid names of a legislator and a conqueror.

The opinion which imputes to the prince all the calamities of his times may be countenanced by the historian as a serious truth or a salutary prejudice. Yet a candid suspicion will arise that the sentiments of Justin were pure and benevolent, and that he might have filled his station without reproach if the faculties of his mind had not been impaired by disease, which deprived the emperor of the use of his feet and confined him to the palace, a stranger to the complaints of the people and the vices of the government. The tardy knowledge of his own impotence determined him to lay down the weight of the diadem; and in the choice of a worthy substitute, he showed some symptoms of a discerning and even magnanimous spirit.

The only son of Justin and Sophia died in his infancy; their daughter Arabia was the wife of Baduarius, superintendent of the palace, and afterwards commander of the Italian armies, who vainly aspired to confirm the rights of marriage by those of adoption. While the empire appeared an object of desire, Justin was accustomed to behold with jealousy and hatred his brothers and cousins, the rivals of his hopes; nor could he depend on the gratitude of those who would accept the purple as a restitution, rather than a gift. Of these competitors, one had been removed by exile, and afterwards by death; and the emperor himself had inflicted such cruel insults on another, that he must either dread his resentment or despise his patience. This domestic animosity was refined into a generous resolution of seeking a successor, not in his family, but in the republic; and the artful Sophia recommended Tiberius, his faithful captain of the guards, whose virtues and fortune the emperor might cherish as the fruit of his judicious choice.

The ceremony of his elevation to the rank of cæsar, or augustus, was performed in the portico of the palace, in the presence of the patriarch and the senate. Justin collected the remaining strength of his mind and body; but the popular belief that his speech was inspired by the Deity betrays a very humble opinion both of the man and of the times: "You behold," said the emperor, "the ensigns of supreme power. You are about to receive them not from my hand, but from the hand of God. Honour them, and from them you will derive honour. Respect the empress your mother; you are now her son; before, you were her servant. Delight not in blood; abstain from revenge; avoid those actions by which I have incurred the public hatred; and consult the experience, rather than the example, of your predecessor. As a man, I have sinned; as a sinner, even in this life, I have been severely punished; but these servants," and he pointed to his ministers, "who have abused my confidence, and inflamed my passions, will appear with me before the tribunal of Christ. I have been dazzled by the splendour of the diadem; be thou wise and modest; remember what you have been, remember what you are. You see around us your slaves and your children; with the authority, assume the tenderness, of a parent. Love your people like yourself; cultivate the affections, maintain the discipline of the army; protect the fortunes of the rich, relieve the necessities of the poor."[1]

The assembly, in silence and in tears, applauded the counsels and sympathised with the repentance of their prince: the patriarch rehearsed the prayers of the church; Tiberius received the diadem on his knees, and

[1 This speech which John of Ephesus[d] says was taken down in shorthand is quoted with an apologetic claim of accuracy by Theophylactus Simocatta.[e]]

Justin, who in his abdication appeared most worthy to reign, addressed the new monarch in the following words: "If you consent, I live; if you command, I die; may the God of heaven and earth infuse into your heart whatever I have neglected or forgotten." The four last years of the emperor Justin were passed in tranquil obscurity; his conscience was no longer tormented by the remembrance of those duties which he was incapable of discharging, and his choice was justified by the filial reverence and gratitude of Tiberius.[b]

The reigns of Justinian and Justin mark a significant turning-point in history. As early as the reign of Justinian the official fiction, by which Latin was assumed to be the language of the empire, had shown signs of breaking down; from this time forward it steadily yields ground to Greek. The Lombard and Syrian annalists were not slow to mark the change; they indicate it by heading the list of "Greek" emperors with the name of Maurice.[h]

Johannes of Ephesus[d] quotes a satire pasted up by some wit reflecting the opinion of the time in a manner unflattering to Justin:

"Build, build aloft thy pillar,
And raise it vast and high;
Then mount and stand upon it,
Soaring proudly in the sky:
Eastward, south and north and westward,
Wherever thou shalt gaze,
Nought thou'lt see but desolations,
The work of thy own days."

## REIGN OF TIBERIUS

Among the virtues of Tiberius, his beauty (he was one of the tallest and most comely of the Romans) might introduce him to the favour of Sophia; and the widow of Justin was persuaded that she should preserve her station and influence under the reign of a second and more youthful husband. But if the ambitious candidate had been tempted to flatter and dissemble, it was no longer in his power to fulfil her expectations or his own promise. The factions of the Hippodrome demanded, with some impatience, the name of their new empress; both the people and Sophia were astonished by the proclamation of Anastasia, the secret, though lawful, wife of the emperor Tiberius.[1] Whatever could alleviate the disappointment of Sophia, imperial honours, a stately palace, a numerous household, was liberally bestowed by the piety of her adopted son; on solemn occasions he attended and consulted the widow of his benefactor; but her ambition disdained the vain semblance of royalty, and the respectful appellation of mother served to exasperate, rather than appease, the rage of an injured woman. While she accepted, and repaid with a courtly smile, the fair expressions of regard and confidence, a secret alliance was concluded between the dowager empress and her ancient enemies; and Justinian, the son of Germanus, was employed as the instrument of her revenge.

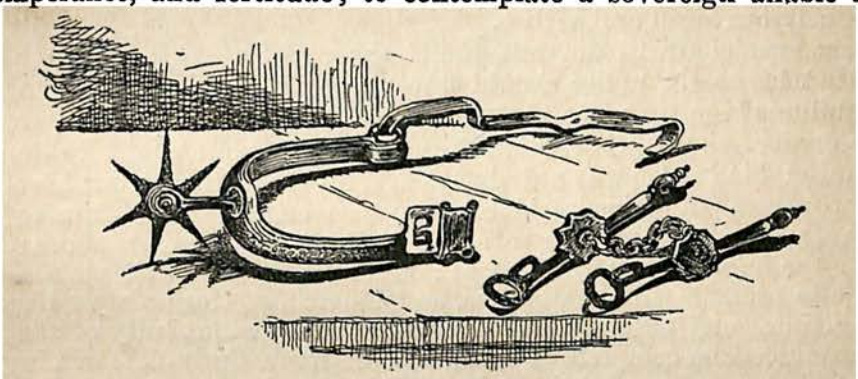
On the first intelligence of her designs Tiberius returned to Constantinople, and the conspiracy was suppressed by his presence and firmness.

[1 This is the story of Theophanes,[f] but John of Ephesus[d] tells an anecdote in direct contradiction, according to which Sophia knew of the wife's existence, but refused to permit her to reside at the palace, being resolved that no other queen should reign while she lived. When, however, Tiberius was crowned he brought Anastasia to the palace and compelled her recognition.]

[578–582 A.D.]

From the pomp and honours which she had abused, Sophia was reduced to a modest allowance; Tiberius dismissed her train, intercepted her correspondence, and committed to a faithful guard the custody of her person. But the services of Justinian were not considered by that excellent prince as an aggravation of his offences; after a mild reproof, his treason and ingratitude were forgiven; and it was commonly believed that the emperor entertained some thoughts of contracting a double alliance with the rival of his throne.

With the odious name of Tiberius, he assumed the more popular appellation of Constantine, and imitated the purer virtues of the Antonines. After recording the vice or folly of so many Roman princes, it is pleasing to repose, for a moment, on a character conspicuous by the qualities of humanity, justice, temperance, and fortitude; to contemplate a sovereign affable in his



BYZANTINE SPUR AND BIT

palace, pious in the church, impartial on the seat of judgment, and victorious, at least by his generals, in the Persian War. The most glorious trophy of his victory consisted in a multitude of captives whom Tiberius entertained, redeemed, and dismissed to their native homes with the charitable spirit of a Christian hero. The merits or misfortunes of his subjects had a dearer claim on him, and he measured his bounty not so much by their expectations as by his own dignity. This maxim, however dangerous in a trustee of the public wealth, was balanced by a principle of humanity and justice which taught him to abhor the gold extracted from the tears of the people.

The wise and equitable laws of Tiberius excited the praise and regret of succeeding times.[1] Constantinople believed that the emperor had discovered a treasure; but his genuine treasure consisted in the practice of liberal economy, and the contempt of all vain and superfluous expense. The Romans of the East would have been happy if the best gift of Heaven, a patriot king, had been confirmed as a proper and permanent blessing. But in less than four years after the death of Justin, his worthy successor sank into a mortal disease, which left him only sufficient time to restore the diadem, according to the tenure by which he held it, to the most deserving of his fellow-citizens. He selected Maurice from the crowd, a judgment more precious than the purple itself. The patriarch and senate were summoned to the bed of the dying prince; he bestowed his daughter and the empire; and his last advice was solemnly delivered by the voice of the quæstor. Tiberius expressed his hope that the virtues of his son and successor would erect the noblest mausoleum to his memory.

[1 Bury, *a* however, declares that "there is considerable reason to remove Tiberius from his pedestal," as he "did not make a good emperor."]

### THE EMPEROR MAURICE (582-602) AND THE WAR WITH PERSIA

The emperor Maurice derived his origin from ancient Rome, but his immediate parents were settled at Arabissus in Cappadocia, and their singular felicity preserved them alive to behold and partake the fortune of their august son. The youth of Maurice was spent in the profession of arms; Tiberius promoted him to the command of a new and favourite legion of twelve thousand confederates; his valour and conduct were signalised in the Persian War; and he returned to Constantinople to accept, as his just reward, the inheritance of the empire. Maurice ascended the throne at the mature age of forty-three years; and he reigned above twenty years over the East and over himself; expelling from his mind the wild democracy of passions, and establishing (according to the quaint expression of Evagrius) a perfect aristocracy of reason and virtue.

Some suspicion will degrade the testimony of a subject, though he protests that his secret praise should never reach the ear of his sovereign, and some failings seem to place the character of Maurice below the purer merit of his predecessor. His cold and reserved demeanour might be imputed to arrogance; his justice was not always exempt from cruelty, nor his clemency from weakness; and his rigid economy too often exposed him to the reproach of avarice. But the rational wishes of an absolute monarch must tend to the happiness of his people; Maurice was endowed with sense and courage to promote that happiness, and his administration was directed by the principles and example of Tiberius. The pusillanimity of the Greeks had introduced so complete a separation between the offices of king and of general, that a private soldier, who had deserved and obtained the purple, seldom or never appeared at the head of his armies. Yet the emperor Maurice enjoyed the glory of restoring the Persian monarch to his throne; his lieutenants waged a doubtful war against the Avars of the Danube; and he cast an eye of pity, of ineffectual pity, on the abject and distressful state of his Italian provinces.

From Italy the emperors were incessantly tormented by tales of misery and demands of succour, which extorted the humiliating confession of their own weakness. The expiring dignity of Rome was only marked by the freedom and energy of her complaints. "If you are incapable," she said, "of delivering us from the sword of the Lombards, save us at least from the calamity of famine." Tiberius forgave the reproach, and relieved the distress; a supply of corn was transported from Egypt to the Tiber; and the Roman people, invoking the name not of Camillus but of St. Peter, repulsed the barbarians from their walls. But the relief was accidental, the danger was perpetual and pressing; and the clergy and senate, collecting the remains of their ancient opulence, a sum of three thousand pounds of gold, despatched the patrician Pamphronius to lay their gifts and their complaints at the foot of the Byzantine throne. The attention of the court and the forces of the East were diverted by the Persian War; but the justice of Tiberius applied the subsidy to the defence of the city; and he dismissed the patrician with his best advice, either to bribe the Lombard chiefs or to purchase the aid of the kings of France.

The arts of negotiation, unknown to the simple greatness of the senate and the cæsars, were assiduously cultivated by the Byzantine princes; and the memorials of their perpetual embassies repeat, with the same uniform prolixity, the language of falsehood and declamation, the insolence of the barbarians, and the servile temper of the tributary Greeks.

## THE PERSIAN WAR (572-591)

In the useless altercations that precede and justify the quarrels of princes, the Greeks and the barbarians accused each other of violating the peace which had been concluded between the two empires about four years before the death of Justinian. The sovereign of Persia and India aspired to reduce under his obedience the province of Yemen or Arabia Felix — the distant land of myrrh and frankincense, which had escaped, rather than opposed, the conquerors of the East. After the defeat of Abrahah under the walls of Mecca, the discord of his sons and brothers gave an easy entrance to the Persians; they chased the strangers of Abyssinia beyond the Red Sea, and a native prince of the ancient Homerites was restored to the throne as the vassal or viceroy of the great Nushirvan. But the nephew of Justinian declared his resolution to avenge the injuries of his Christian ally the prince of Abyssinia, as they suggested a decent pretence to discontinue the annual tribute, which was poorly disguised by the name of pension. The churches of Pers-Armenia were oppressed by the intolerant spirit of the magi; they secretly invoked the protector of the Christians, and after the pious murder of their satraps, the rebels were avowed and supported as the brethren and subjects of the Roman emperor. The complaints of Nushirvan were disregarded by the Byzantine court; Justin yielded to the importunities of the Turks, who offered an alliance against the common enemy; and the Persian monarchy was threatened at the same instant by the united forces of Europe, of Ethiopia, and of Scythia.

At the age of fourscore, the sovereign of the East would perhaps have chosen the peaceful enjoyment of his glory and greatness; but as soon as war became inevitable, he took the field with the alacrity of youth, whilst the aggressor trembled in the palace of Constantinople. Nushirvan, or Chosroes, conducted in person the siege of Dara; and although that important fortress had been left destitute of troops and magazines, the valour of the inhabitants resisted above five months the archers, the elephants, and the military engines of the Great King.

In the meanwhile his general Adarman advanced from Babylon, traversed the desert, passed the Euphrates, insulted the suburbs of Antioch, reduced to ashes the city of Apamea, and laid the spoils of Syria at the feet of his master, whose perseverance, in the midst of winter, at length subverted the bulwark of the East. But these losses, which astonished the provinces and the court, produced a salutary effect in the repentance and abdication of the emperor Justin; a new spirit arose in the Byzantine councils; and a truce of three years was obtained by the prudence of Tiberius. That seasonable interval was employed in the preparations of war; and the voice of rumour proclaimed to the world that, from the distant countries of the Alps and the Rhine, from Scythia, Mœsia, Pannonia, Illyricum, and Isauria, the strength of the imperial cavalry was reinforced with 150,000 soldiers. Yet the king of Persia, without fear or without faith, resolved to prevent the attack of the enemy, again passed the Euphrates, and dismissing the ambassadors of Tiberius, arrogantly commanded them to await his arrival at Cæsarea, the metropolis of the Cappadocian provinces.

The two armies encountered each other in the battle of Melitene; the barbarians, who darkened the air with a cloud of arrows, prolonged their line and extended their wings across the plain; while the Romans, in deep and solid bodies, expected to prevail in closer action by the weight of their swords and lances. A Scythian chief, who commanded their right wing,

suddenly turned the flank of the enemy, attacked their rear-guard in the presence of Chosroes, penetrated to the midst of the camp, pillaged the royal tent, profaned the eternal fire, loaded a train of camels with the spoils of Asia, cut his way through the Persian host, and returned with songs of victory to his friends, who had consumed the day in single combats or ineffectual skirmishes. The darkness of the night, and the separation of the Romans, afforded the Persian monarch an opportunity of revenge; and one of their camps was swept away by a rapid and impetuous assault. But the review of his loss and the consciousness of his danger determined Chosroes to a speedy retreat; he burned, in his passage, the vacant town of Melitene, and, without consulting the safety of his troops, boldly swam the Euphrates on the back of an elephant. After this unsuccessful campaign, the want of magazines, and perhaps some inroad of the Turks, obliged him to disband or divide his forces; the Romans were left masters of the field, and their general Justinian, advancing to the relief of the Pers-Armenian rebels, erected his standard on the banks of the Araxes.

The great Pompey had formerly halted within three days' march of the Caspian; that inland sea was explored for the first time by a hostile fleet, and seventy thousand captives were transplanted from Hyrcania to the isle of Cyprus. On the return of spring, Justinian descended into the fertile plains of Assyria, the flames of war approached the residence of Nushirvan, the indignant monarch sank into the grave, and his last edict restrained his successors from exposing their person in a battle against the Romans. Yet the memory of this transient affront was lost in the glories of a long reign; and his formidable enemies, after indulging their dream of conquest, again solicited a short respite from the calamities of war.

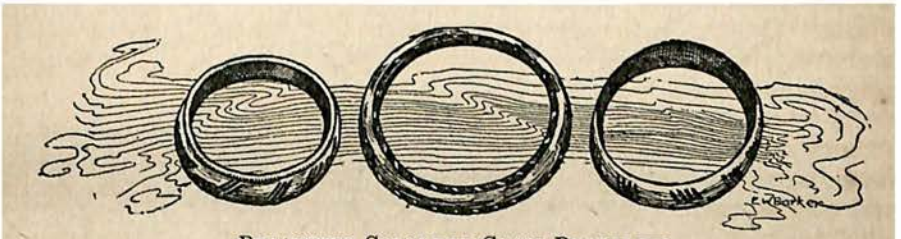
The throne of Chosroes Nushirvan was filled by Hormuz, or Hormisdas, the eldest or most favoured of his sons (579). In every word and in every action the son of Nushirvan degenerated from the virtues of his father. His avarice defrauded the troops; his jealous caprice degraded the satraps; the palace, the tribunals, the waters of the Tigris were stained with the blood of the innocent, and the tyrant exulted in the sufferings and execution of thirteen thousand victims. As the excuse of his cruelty, he sometimes condescended to observe that the fears of the Persians would be productive of hatred, and that their hatred must terminate in rebellion; but he forgot that his own guilt and folly had inspired the sentiments which he deplored, and prepared the event which he so justly apprehended. Exasperated by long and hopeless oppression, the provinces of Babylon, Susa, and Carmania erected the standard of revolt; and the princes of Arabia, India, and Scythia refused the customary tribute to the unworthy successor of Nushirvan. The arms of the Romans, in slow sieges and frequent inroads, afflicted the frontiers of Mesopotamia and Assyria; one of their generals professed himself the disciple of Scipio, and the soldiers were animated by a miraculous image of Christ, whose mild aspect should never have been displayed in the front of battle. At the same time the eastern provinces of Persia were invaded by the great khan, who passed the Oxus at the head of three or four hundred thousand Turks. The imprudent Hormuz accepted their perfidious and formidable aid; the cities of Khorasan or Bactriana were commanded to open their gates; the march of the barbarians towards the mountains of Hyrcania revealed the correspondence of the Turkish and Roman arms; and their union must have subverted the throne of the house of Sassan.

Persia had been lost by a king; it was saved by a hero. While the nation trembled, while Hormuz disguised his terror by the name of suspicion,

[589-590 A.D.]

and his servants concealed their disloyalty under the mask of fear, Bahram alone displayed his undaunted courage and apparent fidelity; and as soon as he found that no more than twelve thousand soldiers would follow him against the enemy, he prudently declared that to this fatal number heaven had reserved the honours of the triumph. The steep and narrow descent of the Pule Rudbar, or Hyrcanian rock, is the only pass through which an army can penetrate into the territory of Rei and the plains of Media. From the commanding heights, a band of resolute men might overwhelm with stones and darts the myriads of the Turkish host; their emperor and his son were transpierced with arrows, and the fugitives were left, without council or provisions, to the revenge of an injured people.

The patriotism of the Persian general was stimulated by his affection for the city of his forefathers; in the hour of victory every peasant became a soldier, and every soldier a hero; and their ardour was kindled by the gorgeous spectacles of beds, and thrones, and tables of massy gold, the spoils of Asia, and the luxury of the hostile camp. A prince of a less malignant temper could not easily have forgiven his benefactor, and the secret hatred of Hormuz was envenomed by a malicious report that Bahram had pri-



BYZANTINE COLOURED GLASS BRACELETS

vately retained the most precious fruits of his Turkish victory. But the approach of a Roman army on the side of the Araxes compelled the implacable tyrant to smile and to applaud; and the toils of Bahram were rewarded with the permission of encountering a new enemy, by their skill and discipline more formidable than a Scythian multitude.

Elated by his recent success, he despatched a herald with a bold defiance to the camp of the Romans, requesting them to fix a day of battle, and to choose whether they would pass the river themselves or allow a free passage to the arms of the Great King. The lieutenant of the emperor Maurice preferred the safer alternative, and this local circumstance, which would have enhanced the victory of the Persians, rendered their defeat more bloody and their escape more difficult. But the loss of his subjects and the danger of his kingdom were overbalanced in the mind of Hormuz by the disgrace of his personal enemy; and no sooner had Bahram collected and reviewed his forces, than he received from a royal messenger the insulting gift of a distaff, a spinning-wheel, and a complete suit of female apparel. Obedient to the will of his sovereign, he showed himself to the soldiers in this unworthy disguise; they resented his ignominy and their own; a shout of rebellion ran through their ranks, and the general accepted their oath of fidelity and vows of revenge. A second messenger, who had been commanded to bring the rebel in chains, was trampled under the feet of an elephant, and manifestoes were diligently circulated, exhorting the Persians to assert their freedom against an odious and contemptible tyrant. The defection was rapid and universal; his loyal slaves were sacrificed to the public fury, and the troops deserted to the standard of Bahram.

As the passes were faithfully guarded, Hormuz could only compute the number of his enemies by the testimony of a guilty conscience and the daily defection of those who, in the hour of his distress, avenged their wrongs or forgot their obligations. He proudly displayed the ensigns of royalty; but the city and palace of Modain had already escaped from the hand of the tyrant. Among the victims of his cruelty, Bindoes, a Sassanian prince, had been cast into a dungeon; his fetters were broken by the zeal and courage of a brother; and he stood before the king at the head of those trusty guards who had been chosen as the ministers of his confinement, and perhaps of his death. Alarmed by the hasty intrusion and bold reproaches of the captive, Hormuz looked round, but in vain, for advice or assistance; discovered that his strength consisted in the obedience of others, and patiently yielded to the single arm of Bindoes, who dragged him from the throne to the same dungeon in which he himself had been so lately confined.

Chosroes, the eldest of the sons of Hormuz, escaped from the city. Attended only by his concubines, and a troop of thirty guards, he secretly departed from the capital, followed the banks of the Euphrates, traversed the desert, and halted at the distance of ten miles from Circesium. About the third watch of the night the Roman prefect was informed of his approach, and he introduced the royal stranger to the fortress at the dawn of day. From thence the king of Persia was conducted to the more honourable residence of Hierapolis; and Maurice dissembled his pride and displayed his benevolence, at the reception of the letters and ambassadors of the grandson of Nushirvan. They humbly represented the vicissitudes of fortune and the common interest of princes, exaggerated the ingratitude of Bahram, the agent of the evil principle, and urged, with specious argument, that it was for the advantage of the Romans themselves to support the two monarchies which balance the world, the two great luminaries by whose salutary influence it is vivified and adorned. The anxiety of Chosroes was soon relieved by the assurance that the emperor had espoused the cause of justice and royalty; but Maurice prudently declined the expense and delay of his useless visit to Constantinople.

In the name of his generous benefactor, a rich diadem was presented to the fugitive prince, with an inestimable gift of jewels and gold; a powerful army was assembled on the frontiers of Syria and Armenia, under the command of the valiant and faithful Narses, and this general, of his own nation and his own choice, was directed to pass the Tigris and never to sheath his sword till he had restored Chosroes to the throne of his ancestors. After the junction of the imperial troops, which Bahram vainly struggled to prevent, the contest was decided by two battles on the banks of the Zab and the confines of Media. The Romans, with the faithful subjects of Persia, amounted to sixty thousand, while the whole force of the usurper did not exceed forty thousand men; the two generals signalised their valour and ability, but the victory was finally determined by the prevalence of numbers and discipline. With the remnant of a broken army, Bahram fled towards the eastern provinces of the Oxus; the enmity of Persia reconciled him to the Turks; but his days were shortened by poison, perhaps the most incurable of poisons — the stings of remorse and despair and the bitter remembrance of lost glory. Yet the modern Persians still commemorate the exploits of Bahram; and some excellent laws have prolonged the duration of his troubled and transitory reign.

The restoration of Chosroes was celebrated with feasts and executions; and the music of the royal banquet was often disturbed by the groans of

dying or mutilated criminals. A band of a thousand Romans, who continued to guard the person of Chosroes, proclaimed his confidence in the fidelity of the strangers; his growing strength enabled him to dismiss this unpopular aid, but he steadily professed the same gratitude and reverence to his adopted father; and till the death of Maurice the peace and alliance of the two empires were faithfully maintained. Yet the mercenary friendship of the Roman prince had been purchased with costly and important gifts; the strong cities of Martyropolis and Dara were restored, and the Pers-Armenians became the willing subjects of an empire whose eastern limit was extended, beyond the example of former times, as far as the banks of the Araxes and the neighbourhood of the Caspian. A pious hope was indulged that the church, as well as the state, might triumph in this revolution; but if Chosroes had sincerely listened to the Christian bishops, the impression was erased by the zeal and eloquence of the magi; if he was armed with philosophic indifference, he accommodated his belief, or rather his professions, to the various circumstances of an exile and a sovereign.

### THE AVARS

While the majesty of the Roman name was revived in the East, the prospect of Europe is less pleasing and less glorious. By the departure of the Lombards and the ruin of the Gepidæ, the balance of power was destroyed on the Danube; and the Avars spread their permanent dominion from the foot of the Alps to the sea coast of the Euxine. The reign of Baian is the brightest era of their monarchy; their chagan, who occupied the rustic palace of Attila, appears to have imitated his character and policy; but as the same scenes were repeated in a smaller circle, a minute representation of the copy would be devoid of the greatness and novelty of the original. The pride of the second Justin, of Tiberius and Maurice, was humbled by a proud barbarian, more prompt to inflict than exposed to suffer the injuries of war; and as often as Asia was threatened by the Persian arms, Europe was oppressed by the dangerous inroads or costly friendship of the Avars.

When the Roman envoys approached the presence of the chagan, they were commanded to wait at the door of his tent till, at the end perhaps of ten or twelve days, he condescended to admit them. If the substance or the style of their message was offensive to his ear, he insulted, with real or affected fury, their own dignity and that of their prince; their baggage was plundered, and their lives were only saved by the promise of a richer present and a more respectful address. But his sacred ambassadors enjoyed and abused an unbounded license in the midst of Constantinople; they urged, with importunate clamours, the increase of tribute or the restitution of captives and deserters; and the majesty of the empire was almost equally degraded by a base compliance, or by the false and fearful excuses with which they eluded such insolent demands.

In the language of a barbarian without guile, the prince of the Avars affected to complain of the insincerity of the Greeks; yet he was not inferior to the most civilised nations in the refinements of dissimulation and perfidy. As the successor of the Lombards, the chagan asserted his claim to the important city of Sirmium, the ancient bulwark of the Illyrian provinces. The plains of lower Hungary were covered with the Avar horse, and a fleet of large boats was built in the Hercynian wood, to descend the Danube and to transport into the Savus the materials of a bridge. But as the strong

garrison of Singidunum, which commanded the conflux of the two rivers, might have stopped their passage and baffled his designs, he dispelled their apprehensions by a solemn oath that his views were not hostile to the empire. He swore by his sword, the symbol of the god of war, that he did not, as the enemy of Rome, construct a bridge upon the Savus. "If I violate my oath," pursued the intrepid Baian, "may I myself, and the last of my nation, perish by the sword; may the heavens and fire, the deity of the heavens, fall upon our heads! may the forests and mountains bury us in their ruins! and the Savus returning, against the laws of nature, to his source, overwhelm us in his angry waters!"

After this barbarous imprecation, he calmly inquired what oath was most sacred and venerable among the Christians, what guilt of perjury it was most dangerous to incur. The bishop of Singidunum presented the Gospel, which the chagan received with devout reverence. "I swear," said he, "by the God who has spoken in this holy book, that I have neither falsehood on my tongue nor treachery in my heart." As soon as he rose from his knees, he accelerated the labour of the bridge, and despatched an envoy to proclaim what he no longer wished to conceal. "Inform the emperor," said the perfidious Baian, "that Sirmium is invested on every side. Advise his prudence to withdraw the citizens and their effects, and to resign a city which it is now impossible to relieve or defend."

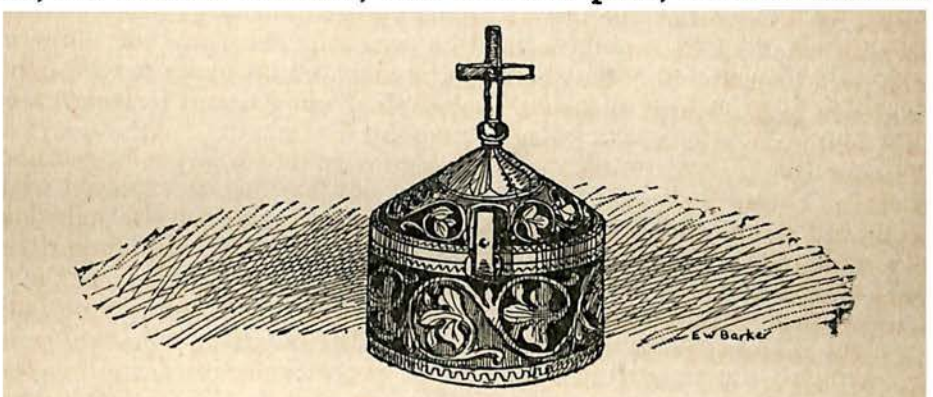
Without the hope of relief, the defence of Sirmium was prolonged above three years; the walls were still untouched; but famine was enclosed within the walls, till a merciful capitulation allowed the escape of the naked and hungry inhabitants. Singidunum, at the distance of fifty miles, experienced a more cruel fate; the buildings were razed, and the vanquished people was condemned to servitude and exile. Yet the ruins of Sirmium are no longer visible; the advantageous situation of Singidunum soon attracted a new colony of Slavonians, and the conflux of the Savus and Danube is still guarded by the fortifications of Belgrade, or the White City, so often and so obstinately disputed by the Christian and Turkish arms. From Belgrade to the walls of Constantinople, a line may be measured of six hundred miles; that line was marked with flames and with blood; the horses of the Avars were alternately bathed in the Euxine and the Adriatic; and the Roman pontiff, alarmed by the approach of a more savage enemy, was reduced to cherish the Lombards as the protectors of Italy. The despair of a captive, whom his country refused to ransom, disclosed to the Avars the invention and practice of military engines; but in the first attempts, they were rudely framed and awkwardly managed; and the resistance of Diocletianopolis and Berœa, of Philippopolis and Hadrianopolis, soon exhausted the skill and patience of the besiegers.

The warfare of Baian was that of a Tatar; yet his mind was susceptible of a humane and generous sentiment: he spared Anchialus, whose salutary waters had restored the health of the best beloved of his wives; and the Romans confessed that their starving army was fed and dismissed by the liberality of a foe. His empire extended over Hungary, Poland, and Prussia, from the mouth of the Danube to that of the Oder; and his new subjects were divided and transplanted by the jealous policy of the conqueror. The eastern regions of Germany, which had been left vacant by the emigration of the Vandals, were replenished with Slavonian colonists; the same tribes are discovered in the neighbourhood of the Adriatic and of the Baltic, and with the name of Baian himself the Illyrian cities of Neisse and Lissa are again found in the heart of Silesia. In the disposition both of his troops

and provinces the chagan exposed the vassals, whose lives he disregarded, to the first assault; and the swords of the enemy were blunted before they encountered the native valour of the Avars.

The Persian alliance restored the troops of the East to the defence of Europe; and Maurice, who had supported for ten years the insolence of the chagan, declared his resolution to march in person against the barbarians. In the space of two centuries, none of the successors of Theodosius had appeared in the field; their lives were supinely spent in the palace of Constantinople, and the Greeks could no longer understand that the name of emperor, in its primitive sense, denoted the chief of the armies of the republic. The martial ardour of Maurice was opposed by the grave flattery of the senate, the timid superstition of the patriarch, and the tears of the empress Constantina; and they all conjured him to devolve on some meaner general the fatigues and perils of a Scythian campaign.

Deaf to their advice and entreaty, the emperor boldly advanced seven miles from the capital; the sacred ensign of the cross was displayed in the front, and Maurice reviewed, with conscious pride, the arms and numbers



A Byzantine Sacred Vessel

of the veterans who had fought and conquered beyond the Tigris. Anchialus saw the last term of his progress by sea and land. He solicited, without success, a miraculous answer to his nocturnal prayers; his mind was confounded by the death of a favourite horse, the encounter of a wild boar, a storm of wind and rain, and the birth of a monstrous child; and he forgot that the best of omens is to unsheathe our sword in the defence of our country. Under the pretence of receiving the ambassadors of Persia, the emperor returned to Constantinople, exchanged the thoughts of war for those of devotion, and disappointed the public hope by his absence and the choice of his lieutenants. The blind partiality of fraternal love might excuse the promotion of his brother Peter, who fled with equal disgrace from the barbarians, from his own soldiers, and from the inhabitants of a Roman city. That city, if we may credit the resemblance of name and character, was the famous Azimuntium, which had alone repelled the tempest of Attila. The example of her warlike youth was propagated to succeeding generations; and they obtained, from the first or second Justin, an honourable privilege, that their valour should be always reserved for the defence of their native country. The brother of Maurice attempted to violate this privilege, and to mingle a patriot band with the mercenaries of his camp; they retired to the church. He was not awed by the sanctity of the place; the people rose in their cause, the ramparts were manned; and Peter proved himself a coward.

The military fame of Comentiolus is the object of satire or comedy rather than of serious history, since he was even deficient in the vile and vulgar qualification of personal courage. His solemn councils, strange evolutions, and secret orders always supplied an apology for flight or delay. If he marched against the enemy, the pleasant valleys of Mount Hæmus opposed an insuperable barrier; but in his retreat he explored with fearless curiosity the most difficult and obsolete paths, which had almost escaped the memory of the oldest native. The only blood which he lost was drawn, in a real or affected malady, by the lancet of a surgeon; and his health, which felt with exquisite sensibility the approach of the barbarians, was uniformly restored by the repose and safety of the winter season. A prince who could promote and support this unworthy favourite must derive no glory from the accidental merit of his colleague Priscus. In five successive battles, which seem to have been conducted with skill and resolution, 17,200 barbarians were made prisoners; near sixty thousand, with four sons of the chagan, were slain. The Roman general surprised a peaceful district of Gepidæ, who slept under the protection of the Avars; and his last trophies were erected on the banks of the Danube and the Theiss. Since the death of Trajan, the arms of the empire had not penetrated so deeply into the old Dacia; yet the success of Priscus was transient and barren, and he was soon recalled, by the apprehension that Baian, with dauntless spirit and recruited forces, was preparing to avenge his defeat under the walls of Constantinople.

### STATE OF THE ROMAN ARMIES

The theory of war was not more familiar to the camps of Cæsar and Trajan than to those of Justinian and Maurice. The iron of Tuscany or Pontus still received the keenest temper from the skill of the Byzantine workmen. The magazines were plentifully stored with every species of offensive and defensive arms. In the construction and use of ships, engines, and fortifications, the barbarians admired the superior ingenuity of a people whom they so often vanquished in the field. The science of tactics, the order, evolutions, and stratagems of antiquity, were transcribed and studied in the books of the Greeks and Romans. But the solitude or degeneracy of the provinces could no longer supply a race of men to handle those weapons, to guard those walls, to navigate those ships, and to reduce the theory of war into bold and successful practice.

The genius of Belisarius and Narses had been formed without a master, and expired without a disciple. Neither honour, nor patriotism, nor generous superstition, could animate the lifeless bodies of slaves and strangers, who had succeeded to the honours of the legions. It was in the camp alone that the emperor should have exercised a despotic command; it was only in the camps that his authority was disobeyed and insulted; he appeased and inflamed with gold the licentiousness of the troops; but their vices were inherent, their victories were accidental, and their costly maintenance exhausted the substance of a state which they were unable to defend. After a long and pernicious indulgence, the cure of this inveterate evil was undertaken by Maurice; but the rash attempt, which drew destruction on his own head, tended only to aggravate the disease. A reformer should be exempt from the suspicion of interest, and he must possess the confidence and esteem of those whom he proposes to reclaim. The troops of Maurice might listen to the voice of a victorious leader; they disdained the admoni-

tions of statesmen and sophists; and when they received an edict which deducted from their pay the price of their arms and clothing, they execrated the avarice of a prince insensible of the dangers and fatigues from which he had escaped.

The camps both of Asia and Europe were agitated with frequent and furious seditions; the enraged soldiers of Edessa pursued, with reproaches, with threats, with wounds, their trembling generals; they overturned the statues of the emperor, cast stones against the miraculous image of Christ, and either rejected the yoke of all civil and military laws or instituted a dangerous model of voluntary subordination. The monarch, always distant and often deceived, was incapable of yielding or persisting according to the exigence of the moment. But the fear of a general revolt induced him too readily to accept any act of valour or any expression of loyalty as an atonement for the popular offence; the new reform was abolished as hastily as it had been announced, and the troops, instead of punishment and restraint, were agreeably surprised by a gracious proclamation of immunities and rewards. But the soldiers accepted without gratitude the tardy and reluctant gifts of the emperor; their insolence was elated by the discovery of his weakness and their own strength, and their mutual hatred was inflamed beyond the desire of forgiveness or the hope of reconciliation.

The historians of the times adopt the vulgar suspicion that Maurice conspired to destroy the troops whom he had laboured to reform; the misconduct and favour of Comentiolus are imputed to this malevolent design; and every age must condemn the inhumanity or avarice of a prince who, by the trifling ransom of six thousand pieces of gold, might have prevented the massacre of twelve thousand prisoners in the hands of the chagan.[1] In the just fervour of indignation, an order was signified to the army of the Danube that they should spare the magazines of the province, and establish their winter quarters in the hostile country of the Avars. The measure of their grievances was full; they pronounced Maurice unworthy to reign, expelled or slaughtered his faithful adherents, and, under the command of Phocas, a simple centurion, returned by hasty marches to the neighbourhood of Constantinople.

### REBELLION AGAINST MAURICE

After a long series of legal successions, the military disorders of the third century were again revived; yet such was the novelty of the enterprise that the insurgents were awed by their own rashness. They hesitated to invest their favourite with the vacant purple; and while they rejected all treaty with Maurice himself, they held a friendly correspondence with his son Theodosius, and with Germanus, the father-in-law of the royal youth. So obscure had been the former condition of Phocas that the emperor was ignorant of the name and character of his rival; but as soon as he learned that the centurion, though bold in sedition, was timid in the face of danger, "Alas!" cried the desponding prince, "if he is a coward, he will surely be a murderer."

Yet if Constantinople had been firm and faithful, the murderer might have spent his fury against the walls; and the rebel army would have been gradually consumed or reconciled by the prudence of the emperor. In the games of the circus, which he repeated with unusual pomp, Maurice

[1 Finlay *i* suggests that these men may have been deserters, but gives very meagre reasons for his charitable supposition.]

disguised, with smiles of confidence, the anxiety of his heart, condescended to solicit the applause of the factions, and flattered their pride by accepting from their respective tribunes a list of nine hundred blues and fifteen hundred greens, whom he affected to esteem as the solid pillars of his throne. Their treacherous or languid support betrayed his weakness and hastened his fall; the green faction were the secret accomplices of the rebels, and the blues recommended lenity and moderation in a contest with their Roman brethren.

The rigid and parsimonious virtues of Maurice had long since alienated the hearts of his subjects; as he walked barefoot in a religious procession, he was rudely assaulted with stones, and his guards were compelled to present their iron maces in the defence of his person. A fanatic monk ran through the streets with a drawn sword, denouncing against him the wrath and the sentence of God; and a vile plebeian, who represented his countenance and apparel, was seated on an ass and pursued by the imprecations of the multitude.

A Byzantine Officer

The emperor suspected the popularity of Germanus with the soldiers and citizens; he feared, he threatened, but he delayed to strike; the patrician fled to the sanctuary of the church; the people rose in his defence, the walls were deserted by the guards, and the lawless city was abandoned to the flames and rapine of a nocturnal tumult. In a small bark the unfortunate Maurice, with his wife and nine children, escaped to the Asiatic shore; but the violence of the wind compelled him to land at the church of St. Autonomus, near Chalcedon, from whence he despatched Theodosius, his eldest son, to implore the gratitude and friendship of the Persian monarch. For himself he refused to fly; his body was tortured with sciatic pains, his mind was enfeebled by superstition; he patiently awaited the event of the revolution, and addressed a fervent and public prayer to the Almighty, that the punishment of his sins might be inflicted in this world rather than in a future life.

After the abdication of Maurice, the two factions disputed the choice of an emperor; but the favourite of the blues was rejected by the jealousy of their antagonists, and Germanus himself was hurried along by the crowds, who rushed to the palace of Hebdomon, seven miles from the city, to adore the majesty of Phocas the centurion. A modest wish of resigning the purple to the rank and merit of Germanus was opposed by his resolution, more obstinate and equally sincere; the senate and clergy obeyed his summons; and as soon as the patriarch was assured of his orthodox belief, he consecrated the successful usurper in the church of St. John the Baptist. On the third day, amidst the acclamations of a thoughtless people, Phocas made his public entry in a chariot drawn by four white horses; the revolt of the troops was rewarded by a lavish donative, and the new sovereign, after visiting the palace, beheld from his throne the games of the Hippodrome. In a dispute of precedency between the two factions, his partial judgment

[602-610 A.D.]

inclined in favour of the greens. "Remember that Maurice is still alive," resounded from the opposite side; and the indiscreet clamour of the blues admonished and stimulated the cruelty of the tyrant. The ministers of death were despatched to Chalcedon; they dragged the emperor from his sanctuary; and the five sons of Maurice were successively murdered before the eyes of their agonising parent. At each stroke, which he felt in his heart, he found strength to rehearse a pious ejaculation: "Thou art just, O Lord! and thy judgments are righteous." And such, in the last moments, was his rigid attachment to truth and justice, that he revealed to the soldiers the pious falsehood of a nurse who presented her own child in the place of a royal infant.

The tragic scene was finally closed by the execution of the emperor himself, in the twentieth year of his reign and the sixty-third of his age (602). The bodies of the father and his five sons were cast into the sea, their heads were exposed at Constantinople to the insults or pity of the multitude; and it was not till some signs of putrefaction had appeared that Phocas connived at the private burial of these venerable remains. In that grave the faults and errors of Maurice were kindly interred. His fate alone was remembered; and at the end of twenty years, in the recital of the history of Theophylact, the mournful tale was interrupted by the tears of the audience.

### PHOCAS EMPEROR (602-610)

Such tears must have flowed in secret, and such compassion would have been criminal, under the reign of Phocas, who was peaceably acknowledged in the provinces of the East and West. The images of the emperor and his wife, Leontia, were exposed in the Lateran to the veneration of the clergy and senate of Rome, and afterwards deposited in the palace of the Cæsars, between those of Constantine and Theodosius. As a subject and a Christian, it was the duty of Gregory to acquiesce in the established government; but the joyful applause with which he salutes the fortune of the assassin has sullied with indelible disgrace the character of the saint.

The successor of the Apostles might have inculcated with decent firmness the guilt of blood and the necessity of repentance; he is content to celebrate the deliverance of the people and the fall of the oppressor; to rejoice that the piety and benignity of Phocas have been raised by providence to the imperial throne; to pray that his hands may be strengthened against all his enemies; and to express a wish, perhaps a prophecy, that, after a long and triumphant reign, he may be transferred from a temporal to an everlasting kingdom. We have already traced the steps of a revolution so pleasing, in Gregory's opinion, both to heaven and earth; and Phocas does not appear less hateful in the exercise than in the acquisition of power. The pencil of an impartial historian has delineated the portrait of a monster—his diminutive and deformed person, the closeness of his shaggy eyebrows, his red hair, his beardless chin, and his cheek disfigured and discoloured by a formidable scar. Ignorant of letters, of laws, and even of arms, he indulged in the supreme rank a more ample privilege of lust and drunkenness, and his brutal pleasures were either injurious to his subjects or disgraceful to himself. Without assuming the office of a prince, he renounced the profession of a soldier; and the reign of Phocas afflicted Europe with ignominious peace and Asia with desolating war. His savage temper was inflamed by passion, hardened by fear, exasperated by resistance or reproach.

The flight of Theodosius to the Persian court had been intercepted by a rapid pursuit or a deceitful message; he was beheaded at Nicæa, and the last hours of the young prince were soothed by the comforts of religion and the consciousness of innocence. Yet this phantom disturbed the repose of the usurper; a whisper was circulated through the East that the son of Maurice was still alive; the people expected their avenger, and the widow and daughters of the late emperor would have adopted as their son and brother the vilest of mankind. In the massacre of the imperial family, the mercy, or rather the discretion, of Phocas had spared these unhappy females, and they were decently confined to a private house. But the spirit of the empress Constantina, still mindful of her father, her husband, and her sons, aspired to freedom and revenge. At the dead of night, she escaped to the sanctuary of St. Sophia; but her tears, and the gold of her associate Germanus, were insufficient to provoke an insurrection. Her life was forfeited to revenge, and even to justice: but the patriarch obtained and pledged an oath for her safety; a monastery was allotted for her prison, and the widow of Maurice accepted and abused the lenity of his assassin.

The discovery or the suspicion of a second conspiracy dissolved the engagements and rekindled the fury of Phocas. A matron who commanded the respect and pity of mankind, the daughter, wife, and mother of emperors, was tortured like the vilest malefactor, to force a confession of her designs and associates; and the empress Constantina, with her three innocent daughters, was beheaded at Chalcedon, on the same ground which had been stained with the blood of her husband and five sons. After such an example, it would be superfluous to enumerate the names and sufferings of meaner victims. Their condemnation was seldom preceded by the forms of trial, and their punishment was embittered by the refinements of cruelty: their eyes were pierced, their tongues were torn from the root, the hands and feet were amputated; some expired under the lash, others in the flames, others again were transfixed with arrows; and a simple speedy death was mercy which they could rarely obtain. The Hippodrome, the sacred asylum of the pleasures and the liberty of the Romans, was polluted with heads and limbs and mangled bodies; and the companions of Phocas were the most sensible that neither his favour, nor their services, could protect them from a tyrant, the worthy rival of the Caligulas and Domitians of the first age of the empire.

A daughter of Phocas, his only child, was given in marriage to the patrician Crispus, and the royal images of the bride and bridegroom were indiscreetly placed in the circus by the side of the emperor. The father must desire that his posterity should inherit the fruit of his crimes, but the monarch was offended by this premature and popular association: the tribunes of the green faction, who accused the officious error of their sculptors, were condemned to instant death: their lives were granted to the prayers of the people; but Crispus might reasonably doubt whether a jealous usurper could forget and pardon his involuntary competition. The green faction was alienated by the ingratitude of Phocas and the loss of their privileges; every province of the empire was ripe for rebellion; and Heraclius, exarch of Africa, persisted above two years in refusing all tribute and obedience to the centurion who disgraced the throne of Constantinople.

By the secret emissaries of Crispus and the senate, the independent exarch was solicited to save and to govern his country; but his ambition was chilled by age, and he resigned the dangerous enterprise to his son Heraclius, and to Nicetas, the son of Gregory, his friend and lieutenant. The powers of Africa were armed by the two adventurous youths; they agreed

that the one should navigate the fleet from Carthage to Constantinople, that the other should lead an army through Egypt and Asia, and that the imperial purple should be the reward of diligence and success. A faint rumour of their undertaking was conveyed to the ears of Phocas, and the wife and mother of the younger Heraclius were secured as the hostages of his faith: but the treacherous art of Crispus extenuated the distant peril, the means of defence were neglected or delayed, and the tyrant supinely slept till the African navy cast anchor in the Hellespont. Their standard was joined at Abydos by the fugitives and exiles who thirsted for revenge; the ships of Heraclius, whose lofty masts were adorned with the holy symbols of religion, steered their triumphant course through the Propontis; and Phocas beheld from the windows of the palace his approaching and inevitable fate. The green faction was tempted by gifts and promises to oppose a feeble and fruitless resistance to the landing of the Africans; but the people, and even the guards, were determined by the well-timed defection of Crispus; and the tyrant was seized by a private enemy, who boldly invaded the solitude of the palace. Stripped of the diadem and purple, clothed in a vile habit, and loaded with chains, he was transported in a small boat to the imperial galley of Heraclius, who reproached him with the crimes of his abominable reign. "Wilt thou govern better?" were the last words of the despair of Phocas. After suffering each variety of insult and torture, his head was severed from his body, the mangled trunk was cast into the flames, and the same treatment was inflicted on the statues of the vain usurper and the seditious banner of the green faction (610 A.D.).

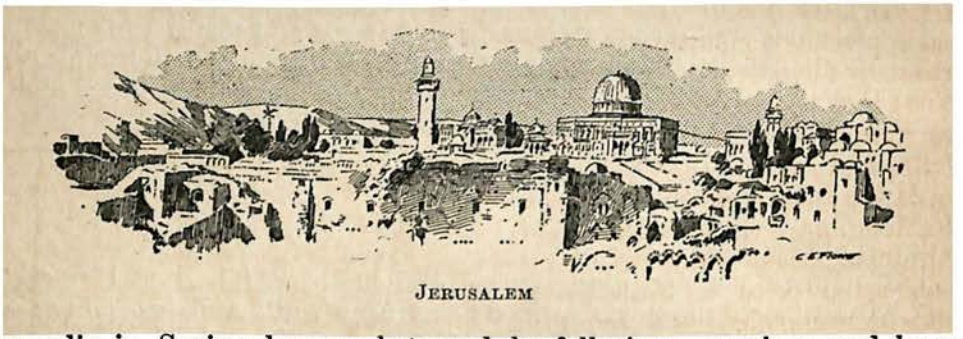
## HERACLIUS EMPEROR (610-641)

The voice of the clergy, the senate, and the people, invited Heraclius to ascend the throne which he had purified from guilt and ignominy; after some graceful hesitation, he yielded to their entreaties. His coronation was accompanied by that of his wife Eudocia; and their posterity, till the fourth generation, continued to reign over the Empire of the East. The voyage of Heraclius had been easy and prosperous, the tedious march of Nicetas was not accomplished before the decision of the contest; but he submitted without a murmur to the fortune of his friend, and his laudable intentions were rewarded with an equestrian statue and a daughter of the emperor. It was more difficult to trust the fidelity of Crispus, whose recent services were recompensed by the command of the Cappadocian army. His arrogance soon provoked, and seemed to excuse, the ingratitude of his new sovereign. In the presence of the senate, the son-in-law of Phocas was condemned to embrace the monastic life; and the sentence was justified by the weighty observation of Heraclius that the man who had betrayed his father could never be faithful to his friend.

Even after his death, the republic was afflicted by the crimes of Phocas, which armed with a pious cause the most formidable of her enemies. According to the friendly and equal forms of the Byzantine and Persian courts, he announced his exaltation to the throne; and his ambassador Lilius, who had presented him with the heads of Maurice and his sons, was the best qualified to describe the circumstances of the tragic scene. However it might be varnished by fiction or sophistry, Chosroes turned with horror from the assassin, imprisoned the pretended envoy, disclaimed the usurper, and declared himself the avenger of his father and benefactor.

The sentiments of grief and resentment, which humanity would feel and honour would dictate, promoted, on this occasion, the interest of the Persian king; and his interest was powerfully magnified by the national and religious prejudices of the magi and satraps. In a strain of artful adulation which assumed the language of freedom, they presumed to censure the excess of his gratitude and friendship for the Greeks—a nation with whom it was dangerous to conclude either peace or alliance; whose superstition was devoid of truth and justice, and who must be incapable of any virtue, since they could perpetrate the most atrocious of crimes—the impious murder of their sovereign. For the crime of an ambitious centurion, the nation which he oppressed was chastised with the calamities of war; and the same calamities, at the end of twenty years, were retaliated and redoubled on the heads of the Persians. The general who had restored Chosroes to the throne, still commanded in the East; and the name of Narses was the formidable sound with which the Assyrian mothers were accustomed to terrify their infants.

But the hero could not depend on the faith of a tyrant; and the tyrant was conscious how little he deserved the obedience of a hero. Narses was removed from his military command; he reared an independent standard at



JERUSALEM

Hierapolis in Syria: he was betrayed by fallacious promises, and burned alive in the market-place of Constantinople. Deprived of the only chief whom they could fear or esteem, the bands which he had led to victory were twice broken by the cavalry, trampled by the elephants, and pierced by the arrows of the barbarians; and a great number of the captives were beheaded on the field of battle by the sentence of the victor, who might justly condemn these seditious mercenaries as the authors or accomplices of the death of Maurice. Under the reign of Phocas, the fortifications of Merdin, Dara, Amida, and Edessa were successively besieged, reduced, and destroyed by the Persian monarch; he passed the Euphrates, occupied the Syrian cities, Hierapolis, Chalcis, and Berœa or Aleppo, and soon encompassed the walls of Antioch with his irresistible arms. The rapid tide of success discloses the decay of the empire, the incapacity of Phocas, and the disaffection of his subjects; and Chosroes provided a decent apology for their submission or revolt, by an impostor who attended his camp as the son of Maurice and the lawful heir of the monarchy.

The first intelligence from the East which Heraclius received, was that of the loss of Antioch; but the aged metropolis, so often overturned by earthquakes and pillaged by the enemy, could supply but a small and languid stream of treasure and blood. The Persians were equally successful and more fortunate in the sack of Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia.

After the reduction of Galilee, and the region beyond the Jordan, whose resistance appears to have delayed the fate of the capital, Jerusalem itself

[615-617 A.D.]

was taken by assault. The sepulchre of Christ, and the stately churches of Helena and Constantine, were consumed, or at least damaged, by the flames; the devout offerings of three hundred years were rifled in one sacrilegious day; the patriarch Zachariah and the True Cross were transported into Persia; and the massacre of ninety thousand Christians is imputed to the Jews and Arabs who swelled the disorder of the Persian march. The fugitives of Palestine were entertained at Alexandria by the charity of Joannes the archbishop, who is distinguished among a crowd of saints by the epithet of alms-giver; and the revenues of the church, with a treasure of three hundred thousand pounds, were restored to the true proprietors, the poor of every country and every denomination.

A BYZANTINE PRIEST

But Egypt itself, the only province which had been exempt, since the time of Diocletian, from foreign and domestic war, was again subdued by the successors of Cyrus. Pelusium, the key of that impervious country, was surprised by the cavalry of the Persians; they passed, with impunity, the innumerable channels of the Delta, and explored the long valley of the Nile, from the pyramids of Memphis to the confines of Ethiopia. Alexandria might have been relieved by a naval force, but the archbishop and the prefect embarked for Cyprus; and Chosroes entered the second city of the empire, which still preserved a wealthy remnant of industry and commerce. His western trophy was erected, not on the walls of Carthage, but in the neighbourhood of Tripoli; the Greek colonies of Cyrene were finally extirpated; and the conqueror, treading in the footsteps of Alexander, returned in triumph through the sands of the Libyan desert. In the same campaign, another army advanced from the Euphrates to the Thracian Bosporus; Chalcedon surrendered after a long siege, and a Persian camp was maintained above ten years in the presence of Constantinople. The sea coast of Pontus, the city of Ancyra, and the isle of Rhodes, are enumerated among the last conquests of the great king; and if Chosroes had possessed any maritime power, his boundless ambition would have spread slavery and desolation over the provinces of Europe.

From the long-disputed banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, the reign of the grandson of Nushirvan was suddenly extended to the Hellespont and the Nile, the ancient limits of the Persian monarchy. But the provinces, which had been fashioned by the habits of six hundred years to the virtues

and vices of the Roman government, supported with reluctance the yoke of the barbarians. The idea of a republic was kept alive by the institutions, or at least by the writings, of the Greeks and Romans, and the subjects of Heraclius had been educated to pronounce the words of liberty and law. But it has always been the pride and policy of oriental princes to display the titles and attributes of their omnipotence; to upbraid a nation of slaves with their true name and abject condition, and to enforce, by cruel and insolent threats, the rigour of their absolute commands.

The Christians of the East were scandalised by the worship of fire and the impious doctrine of the two principles; the magi were not less intolerant than the bishops, and the martyrdom of some native Persians, who had deserted the religion of Zoroaster, was conceived to be the prelude of a fierce and general persecution. By the oppressive laws of Justinian, the adversaries of the church were made the enemies of the state; the alliance of the Jews, Nestorians, and Jacobites had contributed to the success of Chosroes, and his partial favour to the sectaries provoked the hatred and fears of the Catholic clergy. Conscious of their fear and hatred, the Persian conqueror governed his new subjects with an iron sceptre; and as if he suspected the stability of his dominion, he exhausted their wealth by exorbitant tributes and licentious rapine, despoiled or demolished the temples of the East, and transported to his hereditary realms the gold, the silver, the precious marbles, the arts, and the artists of the Asiatic cities.

While the Persian monarch contemplated the wonders of his art and power, he received an epistle from an obscure citizen of Mecca, inviting him to acknowledge Mohammed as the apostle of God. He rejected the invitation, and tore the epistle. "It is thus," exclaimed the Arabian prophet, "that God will tear the kingdom, and reject the supplications of Chosroes." Placed on the verge of the two great empires of the East, Mohammed observed with secret joy the progress of their mutual destruction; and in the midst of the Persian triumphs, he ventured to foretell that, before many years should elapse, victory would again return to the banners of the Romans.

### HERACLIUS PLANS TO REMOVE THE CAPITAL TO CARTHAGE (618)

At the time when this prediction is said to have been delivered, no prophecy could be more distant from its accomplishment, since the first twelve years of Heraclius announced the approaching dissolution of the empire. If the motives of Chosroes had been pure and honourable, he must have ended the quarrel with the death of Phocas, and he would have embraced, as his best ally, the fortunate African who had so generously avenged the injuries of his benefactor Maurice. The prosecution of the war revealed the true character of the barbarian; and the suppliant embassies of Heraclius to beseech his clemency that he would spare the innocent, accept a tribute, and give peace to the world, were rejected with contemptuous silence or insolent menace. Syria, Egypt, and the provinces of Asia were subdued by the Persian arms, while Europe, from the confines of Istria to the long wall of Thrace, was oppressed by the Avars, unsatiated with the blood and rapine of the Italian War.

By these implacable enemies, Heraclius, on either side, was insulted and besieged: and the Roman Empire was reduced to the walls of Constantinople, with the remnant of Greece, Italy, and Africa, and some maritime cities, from Tyre to Trebizond, of the Asiatic coast. After the loss of Egypt, the

[616-622 A.D.]

capital was afflicted with famine and pestilence; and the emperor, incapable of resistance and hopeless of relief, had resolved to transfer his person and government to the more secure residence of Carthage. His ships were already laden with the treasures of the palace; but his flight was arrested by the patriarch, who armed the powers of religion in the defence of his country, led Heraclius to the altar of St. Sophia, and extorted a solemn oath, that he would live and die with the people whom God had entrusted to his care.

The chagan was encamped in the plains of Thrace; but he dissembled his perfidious designs, and solicited an interview with the emperor near the town of Heraclea. Their reconciliation was celebrated with equestrian games; the senate and people in their gayest apparel resorted to the festival of peace; and the Avars beheld, with envy and desire, the spectacle of Roman luxury. On a sudden the Hippodrome was encompassed by the Scythian cavalry, who had pressed their secret and nocturnal march: the tremendous sound of the chagan's whip gave the signal of the assault; and Heraclius, wrapping his diadem round his arm, was saved with extreme hazard by the fleetness of his horse. So rapid was the pursuit, that the Avars almost entered the golden gate of Constantinople with the flying crowds; but the plunder of the suburbs rewarded their treason, and they transported beyond the Danube 270,000 captives. On the shore of Chalcedon, the emperor held a safer conference with a more honourable foe, who, before Heraclius descended from his galley, saluted with reverence and pity the majesty of the purple.

The friendly offer of Sain, the Persian general, to conduct an embassy to the presence of the Great King, was accepted with the warmest gratitude, and the prayer for pardon and peace was humbly presented by the prætorian prefect, the prefect of the city, and one of the first ecclesiastics of the patriarchal church. But the lieutenant of Chosroes had fatally mistaken the intentions of his master. "It was not an embassy," said the tyrant of Asia, "it was the person of Heraclius, bound in chains, that he should have brought to the foot of my throne. I will never give peace to the emperor of Rome till he has abjured his crucified God, and embraced the worship of the sun." Sain was flayed alive, according to the inhuman practice of his country; and the separate and rigorous confinement of the ambassadors violated the law of nations, and the faith of an express stipulation. Yet the experience of six years at length persuaded the Persian monarch to renounce the conquest of Constantinople, and to specify the annual tribute or ransom of the Roman Empire: a thousand talents of gold, a thousand talents of silver, a thousand silk robes, a thousand horses, and a thousand virgins. Heraclius subscribed these ignominious terms; but the time and space which he obtained to collect such treasure from the poverty of the East was industriously employed in the preparations of a bold and desperate attack.

## THE AWAKENING OF HERACLIUS

Of the characters conspicuous in history, that of Heraclius is one of the most extraordinary and inconsistent. In the first and the last years of a long reign, the emperor appears to be the slave of sloth, of pleasure, or of superstition, the careless and impotent spectator of the public calamities. But the languid mists of the morning and evening are separated by the brightness of the meridian sun: the Arcadius of the palace arose the Cæsar of the camp; and the honour of Rome and Heraclius was gloriously retrieved by the exploits and trophies of six adventurous campaigns.

It was the duty of the Byzantine historians to have revealed the causes of his slumber and vigilance. At this distance we can only conjecture, that he was endowed with more personal courage than political resolution; that he was detained by the charms, and perhaps the arts, of his niece Martina, with whom, after the death of Eudocia, he contracted an incestuous marriage; and that he yielded to the base advice of the counsellors, who urged as a fundamental law that the life of the emperor should never be exposed in the field. Perhaps he was awakened by the last insolent demand of the Persian conqueror; but at the moment when Heraclius assumed the spirit of a hero, the only hopes of the Romans were drawn from the vicissitudes of fortune which might threaten the proud prosperity of Chosroes, and must be favourable to those who had attained the lowest period of depression.

To provide for the expenses of war was the first care of the emperor; and for the purpose of collecting the tribute, he was allowed to solicit the benevolence of the Eastern provinces. But the revenue no longer flowed in the usual channels; the credit of an arbitrary prince is annihilated by his power; and the courage of Heraclius was first displayed in daring to borrow the consecrated wealth of churches, under the solemn vow of restoring, with usury, whatever he had been compelled to employ in the service of religion and of the empire. The clergy themselves appear to have sympathised with the public distress, and the discreet patriarch of Alexandria, without admitting the precedent of sacrilege, assisted his sovereign by the miraculous or seasonable revelation of a secret treasure.[1] Of the soldiers who had conspired with Phocas, only two were found to have survived the stroke of time and of the barbarians; the loss, even of these seditious veterans, was imperfectly supplied by the new levies of Heraclius, and the gold of the sanctuary united, in the same camp, the names, and arms, and languages, of the East and West. He would have been content with the neutrality of the Avars; and his friendly entreaty, that the chagan would act, not as the enemy but as the guardian of the empire, was accompanied with a more persuasive donative of two hundred thousand pieces of gold. Two days after the festival of Easter, the emperor, exchanging his purple for the simple garb of a penitent and warrior, gave the signal of his departure. To the faith of the people Heraclius recommended his children; the civil and military powers were vested in the most deserving hands, and the discretion of the patriarch and senate was authorised to save or surrender the city, if they should be oppressed in his absence by the superior forces of the enemy.

The neighbouring heights of Chalcedon were covered with tents and arms: but if the new levies of Heraclius had been rashly led to the attack, the victory of the Persians in the sight of Constantinople might have been the last day of the Roman Empire. As imprudent would it have been to advance into the provinces of Asia, leaving their innumerable cavalry to intercept his convoys, and continually to hang on the lassitude and disorder of his rear. But the Greeks were still masters of the sea; a fleet of galleys, transports, and store-ships was assembled in the harbour; the barbarians consented to embark; a steady wind carried them through the Hellespont; the western and southern coast of Asia Minor lay on their left hand; the spirit of their chief was first displayed in a storm; and even the eunuchs of his train were excited to suffer and to work by the example of their master.

[1] Baronius gravely relates this discovery, or rather transmutation of barrels, not of honey but of gold. Yet the loan was arbitrary, since it was collected by soldiers, who were ordered to leave the patriarch not more than one hundred pounds of gold.

[622-623 A.D.]

He landed his troops on the confines of Syria and Cilicia, in the Gulf of Scanderoon, where the coast suddenly turns to the south; and his discernment was expressed in the choice of this important post.

From all sides, the scattered garrisons of the maritime cities and the mountains might repair with speed and safety to his imperial standard. The natural fortifications of Cilicia protected, and even concealed, the camp of Heraclius, which was pitched near Issus, on the same ground where Alexander had vanquished the host of Darius. The angle which the emperor occupied was deeply indented into a vast semicircle of the Asiatic, Armenian, and Syrian provinces; and to whatsoever point of the circumference he should direct his attack, it was easy for him to dissemble his own motions, and to prevent those of the enemy. In the camp of Issus, the Roman general reformed the sloth and disorder of the veterans, and educated the new recruits in the knowledge and practice of military virtue. Unfolding the miraculous image of Christ, he urged them to revenge the holy altars which had been profaned by the worshippers of fire; addressing them by the endearing appellations of sons and brethren, he deplored the public and private wrongs of the republic. The subjects of a monarch were persuaded that they fought in the cause of freedom; and a similar enthusiasm was communicated to the foreign mercenaries, who must have viewed with equal indifference the interest of Rome and of Persia.

Heraclius himself, with the skill and patience of a centurion, inculcated the lessons of the school of tactics, and the soldiers were assiduously trained in the use of their weapons, and the exercises and evolutions of the field. The cavalry and infantry, in light or heavy armour, were divided into two parties; the trumpets were fixed in the centre, and their signals directed the march, the charge, the retreat, or pursuit; the direct or oblique order, the deep or extended phalanx; to represent in fictitious combat the operations of genuine war. Whatever hardship the emperor imposed on the troops, he inflicted with equal severity on himself; their labour, their diet, their sleep, were measured by the inflexible rules of discipline; and, without despising the enemy, they were taught to repose an implicit confidence in their own valour and the wisdom of their leader.

Cilicia was soon encompassed with the Persian arms; but their cavalry hesitated to enter the defiles of Mount Taurus, till they were circumvented by the evolutions of Heraclius, who insensibly gained their rear, whilst he appeared to present his front in order of battle. By a false motion, which seemed to threaten Armenia, he drew them, against their wishes, to a general action. They were tempted by the artful disorder of his camp; but when they advanced to combat, the ground, the sun, and the expectation of both armies were unpropitious to the barbarians; the Romans successfully repeated their tactics in a field of battle, and the event of the day[1] declared to the world, that the Persians were not invincible, and that a hero was invested with the purple.

Strong in victory and fame, Heraclius boldly ascended the heights of Mount Taurus, directed his march through the plains of Cappadocia, and established his troops for the winter season in safe and plentiful quarters on the banks of the river Halys. His soul was superior to the vanity of entertaining Constantinople with an imperfect triumph: but the presence of the emperor was indispensably required to sooth the restless and rapacious spirit of the Avars.

[1 A lunar eclipse two days earlier, fixes the date of the battle in January, 623.]

TRIUMPH OF HERACLIUS

Since the days of Scipio and Hannibal, no bolder enterprise has been attempted than that which Heraclius achieved for the deliverance of the empire. He permitted the Persians to oppress for a while the provinces, and to insult with impunity the capital of the East; while the Roman emperor explored his perilous way through the Black Sea and the mountains of Armenia, penetrated into the heart of Persia, and recalled the armies of the Great King to the defence of their bleeding country. With a select band of five thousand soldiers, Heraclius sailed from Constantinople to Trebizond; assembled his forces which had wintered in the Pontic regions; and from the mouth of the Phasis to the Caspian Sea, encouraged his subjects and allies to march with the successor of Constantine under the faithful and victorious banner of the cross.

When the legions of Lucullus and Pompey first passed the Euphrates, they blushed at their easy victory over the natives of Armenia. But the long experience of war had hardened the minds and bodies of that effeminate people; their zeal and bravery were approved in the service of a declining empire; they abhorred and feared the usurpation of the house of Sassan, and the memory of persecution envenomed their pious hatred of the enemies of Christ. The limits of Armenia, as it had been ceded to the emperor Maurice, extended as far the Araxes; the river submitted to the indignity of a bridge; and Heraclius, in the footsteps of Mark Antony, advanced towards the city of Tauris or Gandzaca, the ancient and modern capital of one of the provinces of Media. At the head of forty thousand men, Chosroes himself had returned from some distant expedition to oppose the progress of the Roman arms; but he retreated on the approach of Heraclius, declining the generous alternative of peace or battle.

The rapid conquests of Heraclius were suspended only by the winter season; a motive of prudence or superstition determined his retreat into the province of Albania, along the shores of the Caspian; and his tents were most probably pitched in the plains of Mogan, the favourite encampment of oriental princes. In the course of this successful inroad, he signalised the zeal and revenge of a Christian emperor: at his command, the soldiers extinguished the fire and destroyed the temples of the magi; the statues of Chosroes, who aspired to divine honours, were abandoned to the flames; and the ruin of Thebarma or Ormia, which had given birth to Zoroaster himself, made some atonement for the injuries of the Holy Sepulchre. A purer spirit of religion was shown in the relief and deliverance of fifty thousand captives. Heraclius was rewarded by their tears and grateful acclamations; but this wise measure, which spread the fame of his benevolence, diffused the murmurs of the Persians against the pride and obstinacy of their own sovereign.

Amidst the glories of the succeeding campaigns, Heraclius is almost lost to our eyes, and to those of the Byzantine historians. From the spacious and fruitful plains of Albania, the emperor appears to follow the chain of Hyrcanian Mountains, to descend into the province of Media or Irak, and to carry his victorious arms as far as the royal cities of Casbin and Ispahan,[1] which had never been approached by a Roman conqueror. Alarmed by the danger of his kingdom, the powers of Chosroes were already recalled from the Nile and the Bosporus, and three formidable armies surrounded, in a distant and hostile land, the camp of the emperor. The Colchian allies prepared to

[1 This is Gibbon's[b] opinion, but Finlay[i] thinks it "rests on a very doubtful conjecture."]

[625-626 A.D.]

desert his standard; and the fears of the bravest veterans were expressed, rather than concealed, by their desponding silence. "Be not terrified," said the intrepid Heraclius, "by the multitude of your foes. With the aid of heaven, one Roman may triumph over a thousand barbarians. But if we devote our lives for the salvation of our brethren, we shall obtain the crown of martyrdom, and our immortal reward will be liberally paid by God and posterity."[1] These magnanimous sentiments were supported by the vigour of his actions. He repelled the threefold attack of the Persians, improved the divisions of their chiefs, and by a well-concerted train of marches, retreats, and successful actions, finally chased them from the field into the fortified cities of Media and Assyria.

In the severity of the winter season, Shahr Barz (or Sarbaraza) deemed himself secure in the walls of Salban; he was surprised by the activity of Heraclius, who divided his troops and performed a laborious march in the silence of the night. The flat roofs of the houses were defended with useless valour against the darts and torches of the Romans: the satraps and nobles of Persia, with their wives and children, and the flower of their martial youth, were either slain or made prisoners. The general escaped by a precipitate flight, but his golden armour was the prize of the conqueror; and the soldiers of Heraclius enjoyed the wealth and repose which they had so nobly deserved.

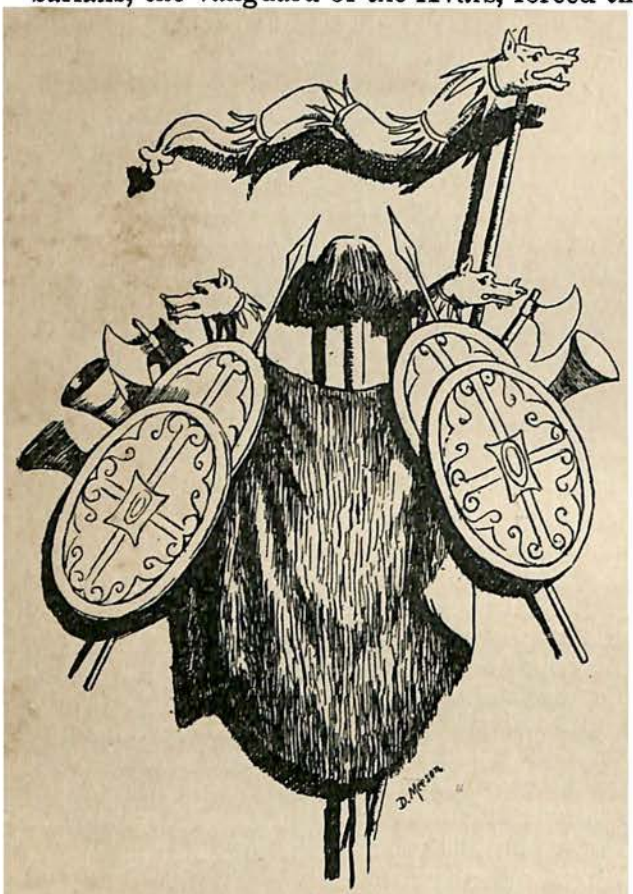
On the return of spring, the emperor traversed in seven days the mountains of Kurdistan, and passed without resistance the rapid stream of the Tigris. Oppressed by the weight of their spoils and captives, the Roman army halted under the walls of Amida; and Heraclius informed the senate of Constantinople of his safety and success, which they had already felt by the retreat of the besiegers. The bridges of the Euphrates were destroyed by the Persians; but as soon as the emperor had discovered a ford, they hastily retired to defend the banks of the Sarus, in Cilicia. That river, an impetuous torrent, was about three hundred feet broad; the bridge was fortified with strong turrets, and the banks were lined with barbarian archers. After a bloody conflict, which continued till the evening, the Romans prevailed in the assault, and a Persian of gigantic size was slain and thrown into the Sarus by the hand of the emperor himself. The enemies were dispersed and dismayed; Heraclius pursued his march to Sebaste in Cappadocia; and at the expiration of three years, the same coast of the Euxine applauded his return from a long and victorious expedition.

Instead of skirmishing on the frontier, the two monarchs who disputed the empire of the East aimed their desperate strokes at the heart of their rival. The military force of Persia was wasted by the marches and combats of twenty years, and many of the veterans, who had survived the perils of the sword and the climate, were still detained in the fortresses of Egypt and Syria. But the revenge and ambition of Chosroes exhausted his kingdom; and the new levies of subjects, strangers, and slaves were divided into three formidable bodies. The first army of fifty thousand men, illustrious by the ornament and title of the golden spears, was destined to march against Heraclius; the second was stationed to prevent his junction with the troops of his brother Theodorus; and the third was commanded to besiege Constantinople, and to second the operations of the chagan, with whom the Persian king had ratified a treaty of alliance and partition.

[1 The words are given by Theophanes *f* but Bury *g* finds the lines so metrical that he thinks they must have been quoted from a lost work by George of Pisidia, whose *Heraclian Persian Expedition* and *War with the Avars* are important sources of information in this respect.]

THE SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE (626)

Shahr Barz, the general of the third army, penetrated through the provinces of Asia to the well-known camp of Chalcedon, and amused himself with the destruction of the sacred and profane buildings of the Asiatic suburbs, while he impatiently waited the arrival of his Scythian friends on the opposite side of the Bosporus. On the 29th of June, thirty thousand barbarians, the vanguard of the Avars, forced the long wall, and drove into the capital a promiscuous crowd of peasants, citizens, and soldiers. Fourscore thousand of his native subjects, and of the vassal tribes of Gepidæ, Russians, Bulgarians, and Slavonians advanced under the standard of the chagan; a month was spent in marches and negotiations, but the whole city was invested on the 31st of July, from the suburbs of Pera and Galata to the Blachernæ and seven towers; and the inhabitants descried with terror the flaming signals of the European and Asiatic shores.



TROPHY OF ROMAN ARMS AND ENSIGN

In the meanwhile the magistrates of Constantinople repeatedly strove to purchase the retreat of the chagan; but their deputies were rejected and insulted; and he suffered the patricians to stand before his throne, while the Persian envoys, in silk robes, were seated by his side. "You see," said the haughty barbarian, "the proofs of my perfect union with the Great King; and his lieutenant is ready to send into my camp a select band of three thousand warriors. Presume no longer to tempt your master with a partial and inadequate ransom: your wealth and your city are the only presents worthy of my acceptance. For yourselves, I shall permit you to depart, each with an undergarment and a shirt; and, at my entreaty, my friend Shahr Barz will not refuse a passage through his lines. Your absent prince, even now a captive or fugitive, has left Constantinople to its fate; nor can you escape the arms of the Avars and Persians, unless you could soar into the air like birds, unless like fishes you could dive into the waves."

During ten successive days, the capital was assaulted by the Avars, who had made some progress in the science of attack; they advanced to sap or batter the wall, under the cover of the impenetrable tortoise; their engines discharged a perpetual volley of stones and darts; and twelve lofty towers of wood exalted the combatants to the height of the neighbouring ramparts.

[626-627 A.D.]

But the senate and people were animated by the spirit of Heraclius, who had detached to their relief a body of twelve thousand cuirassiers; the powers of fire and mechanics were used with superior art and success in the defence of Constantinople; and the galleys, with two and three ranks of oars, commanded the Bosporus, and rendered the Persians the idle spectators of the defeat of their allies. The Avars were repulsed; a fleet of Slavonian canoes was destroyed in the harbour; the vassals of the chagan threatened to desert, his provisions were exhausted, and after burning his engines, he gave the signal of a slow and formidable retreat. The devotion of the Romans ascribed this signal deliverance to the Virgin Mary; but the mother of Christ would surely have condemned their inhuman murder of the Persian envoys, who were entitled to the rights of humanity, if they were not protected by the laws of nations.

### THIRD EXPEDITION OF HERACLIUS

After the division of his army, Heraclius prudently retired to the banks of the Phasis, from whence he maintained a defensive war against the fifty thousand gold spears of Persia. His anxiety was relieved by the deliverance of Constantinople; his hopes were confirmed by a victory of his brother Theodorus; and to the hostile league of Chosroes with the Avars, the Roman emperor opposed the useful and honourable alliance of the Turks. At his liberal invitation, the horde of Khazars transported their tents from the plains of the Volga to the mountains of Georgia; Heraclius received them in the neighbourhood of Tiflis, and the khan with his nobles dismounted from their horses, if we may credit the Greeks, and fell prostrate on the ground, to adore the purple of the cæsar. Such voluntary homage and important aid were entitled to the warmest acknowledgments; and the emperor, taking off his own diadem, placed it on the head of the Turkish prince, whom he saluted with a tender embrace and the appellation of son. After a sumptuous banquet he presented Ziebel with the plate and ornaments, the gold, the gems, and the silk, which had been used at the imperial table, and, with his own hand, distributed rich jewels and earrings to his new allies.

In a secret interview he produced the portrait of his daughter Eudocia, condescended to flatter the barbarian with the promise of a fair and august bride, obtained an immediate succour of forty thousand horse, and negotiated a strong diversion of the Turkish arms on the side of the Oxus. The Persians, in their turn, retreated with precipitation; in the camp of Edessa, Heraclius reviewed an army of seventy thousand Romans and strangers; and some months were successfully employed in the recovery of the cities of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Armenia, whose fortifications had been imperfectly restored. Shahr Barz still maintained the important station of Chalcedon; but the jealousy of Chosroes, or the artifice of Heraclius, soon alienated the mind of that powerful satrap from the service of his king and country. A messenger was intercepted with a real or fictitious mandate to the cadarigan, or second in command, directing him to send, without delay, to the throne, the head of a guilty or unfortunate general. The despatches were transmitted to Shahr Barz himself; and as soon as he read the sentence of his own death, he dexterously inserted the names of four hundred officers, assembled a military council, and asked the cadarigan whether he was prepared to execute the commands of their tyrant? The Persians unanimously declared that

Chosroes had forfeited the sceptre; a separate treaty was concluded with the government of Constantinople; and if some considerations of honour or policy restrained Shahr Barz from joining the standard of Heraclius, the emperor was assured that he might prosecute, without interruption, his designs of victory and peace.

Deprived of his firmest support, and doubtful of the fidelity of his subjects, the greatness of Chosroes was still conspicuous in its ruins. The number of five hundred thousand may be interpreted as an oriental metaphor, to describe the men and arms, the horses and elephants, that covered Media and Assyria against the invasion of Heraclius. Yet the Romans boldly advanced from the Araxes to the Tigris, and the timid prudence of Rhazates was content to follow them by forced marches through a desolate country, till he received a peremptory mandate to risk the fate of Persia in a decisive battle. Eastward of the Tigris, at the end of the bridge of Mosul, the great Nineveh had formerly been erected; the city, and even the ruins of the city, had long since disappeared: the vacant space afforded a spacious field for the operations of the two armies. But these operations are neglected by the Byzantine historians, and, like the authors of epic poetry and romance, they ascribe the victory, not to the military conduct, but to the personal valour of their favourite hero.

### BATTLE OF NINEVEH (627)

On this memorable day, Heraclius, on his horse Phallus,[1] surpassed the bravest of his warriors; his lip was pierced with a spear, the steed was wounded in the thigh, but he carried his master safe and victorious through the triple phalanx of the barbarians. In the heat of the action, three valiant chiefs were successively slain by the sword and lance of the emperor; among these was Rhazates himself; he fell like a soldier, but the sight of his head scattered grief and despair through the fainting ranks of the Persians. His armour of pure and massy gold, the shield of 120 plates, the sword and belt, the saddle and cuirass, adorned the triumph of Heraclius; and if he had not been faithful to Christ and his mother, the champion of Rome might have offered the fourth *opime* spoils to the Jupiter of the Capitol. In the battle of Nineveh, which was fiercely fought from daybreak to the eleventh hour, twenty-eight standards, besides those which might be broken or torn, were taken from the Persians; the greatest part of their army was cut in pieces, and the victors, concealing their own loss, passed the night on the field. They acknowledged, that on this occasion it was less difficult to kill than to discomfit the soldiers of Chosroes; amidst the bodies of their friends, no more than two bow-shot from the enemy, the remnant of the Persian cavalry stood firm till the seventh hour of the night; about the eighth hour they retired to their unrifled camp, collected their baggage, and dispersed on all sides, from the want of orders rather than of resolution.

The diligence of Heraclius was not less admirable in the use of victory; by a march of forty-eight miles in four-and-twenty hours, his vanguard occupied the bridges of the great and the lesser Zab; and the cities and palaces of Assyria were open for the first time to the Romans. By a just gradation of magnificent scenes, they penetrated to the royal seat of Dastagherd, and though much of the treasure had been removed, and much had been expended, the remaining wealth appears to have exceeded their hopes, and

[1 According to others the name should be Phalbas or Dorkon.]

even to have satiated their avarice. Whatever could not be easily transported, they consumed with fire, that Chosroes might feel the anguish of those wounds which he had so often inflicted on the provinces of the empire; and justice might allow the excuse, if the desolation had been confined to the works of regal luxury, if national hatred, military license, and religious zeal, had not wasted with equal rage the habitations and the temples of the guiltless subject.

The recovery of three hundred Roman standards, and the deliverance of the numerous captives of Edessa and Alexandria, reflect a purer glory on the arms of Heraclius. From the palace of Dastagherd he pursued his march within a few miles of Modain or Ctesiphon, till he was stopped on the banks of the Arba, by the difficulty of the passage, the rigour of the season, and perhaps the fame of an impregnable capital. The return of the emperor is marked by the modern name of the city of Sherhzur; he fortunately passed Mount Zara before the snow, which fell incessantly thirty-four days; and the citizens of Ganzaca, or Tauris, were compelled to entertain his soldiers and their horses with an hospitable reception.

### THE END OF CHOSROES (628)

When the ambition of Chosroes was reduced to the defence of his hereditary kingdom, the love of glory, or even the sense of shame, should have urged him to meet his rival in the field. In the battle of Nineveh, his courage might have taught the Persians to vanquish, or he might have fallen with honour by the lance of a Roman emperor. The successor of Cyrus chose rather, at a secure distance, to expect the event, to assemble the relics of the defeat, and to retire by measured steps before the march of Heraclius, till he beheld with a sigh the once-loved mansions of Dastagherd. Both his friends and enemies were persuaded that it was the intention of Chosroes to bury himself under the ruins of the city and palace; and as both might have been equally adverse to his flight, the monarch of Asia, with Sira and three concubines, escaped through a hole in the wall nine days before the arrival of the Romans. The slow and stately procession in which he showed himself to the prostrate crowd was changed to a rapid and secret journey; and the first evening he lodged in the cottage of a peasant, whose humble door would scarcely give admittance to the Great King. His superstition was subdued by fear: on the third day he entered with joy the fortifications of Ctesiphon; yet he still doubted of his safety till he had opposed the river Tigris to the pursuit of the Romans.

It was still in the power of Chosroes to obtain a reasonable peace; and he was repeatedly pressed by the messengers of Heraclius to spare the blood of his subjects, and to relieve a humane conqueror from the painful duty of carrying fire and sword through the fairest countries of Asia. But the pride of the Persian had not yet sunk to the level of his fortune; he derived a momentary confidence from the retreat of the emperor; he wept with impotent rage over the ruins of his Assyrian palaces, and disregarded too long the rising murmurs of the nation, who complained that their lives and fortunes were sacrificed to the obstinacy of an old man. That unhappy old man was himself tortured with the sharpest pains, both of mind and body; and, in the consciousness of his approaching end, he resolved to fix the tiara on the head of Merdaza, the most favoured of his sons. But the will of Chosroes was no longer revered, and Siroes, who gloried in the rank and

merit of his mother Sira, had conspired with the malcontents to assert and anticipate the rights of primogeniture. Twenty-two satraps, they styled themselves patriots, were tempted by the wealth and honours of a new reign; to the soldiers, the heir of Chosroes promised an increase of pay; to the Christians, the free exercise of their religion; to the captives, liberty and rewards; and to the nation, instant peace and the reduction of taxes.

It was determined by the conspirators that Siroes, with the ensigns of royalty, should appear in the camp; and if the enterprise should fail, his escape was contrived to the imperial court. But the new monarch was saluted with unanimous acclamations; the flight of Chosroes (yet where could he have fled?) was rudely arrested, eighteen sons were massacred before his face, and he was thrown into a dungeon, where he expired on the fifth day. The Greeks and modern Persians minutely described how Chosroes was insulted, and famished, and tortured, by the command of an inhuman son, who so far surpassed the example of his father; but at the time of his death, what tongue would relate the story of the parricide — what eye could penetrate into the tower of darkness? According to the faith and mercy of his Christian enemies, he sank without hope into a still deeper abyss; and it will not be denied that tyrants of every age and sect are the best entitled to such infernal abodes. The glory of the house of Sassan ended with the life of Chosroes; his unnatural son enjoyed only eight months the fruit of his crimes; and in the space of four years the regal title was assumed by nine candidates, who disputed with the sword or dagger the fragments of an exhausted monarchy. Every province, and each city of Persia, was the scene of independence, of discord, and of blood; and the state of anarchy prevailed about eight years longer, till the factions were silenced and united under the common yoke of the Arabian caliphs.

As soon as the mountains became passable, the emperor received the welcome news of the success of the conspiracy, the death of Chosroes, and the elevation of his eldest son to the throne of Persia. The authors of the revolution, eager to display their merits in the court or camp of Tauris, preceded the ambassadors of Siroes, who delivered the letters of their master to his brother the emperor of the Romans. In the language of the usurpers of every age, he imputes his own crimes to the Deity, and, without degrading his equal majesty, he offers to reconcile the long discord of the two nations, by a treaty of peace and alliance more durable than brass or iron. The conditions of the treaty were easily defined and faithfully executed.

In the recovery of the standards and prisoners which had fallen into the hands of the Persians, the emperor imitated the example of Augustus: their care of the national dignity was celebrated by the poets of the times, but the decay of genius may be measured by the distance between Horace and George of Pisidia; the subjects and brethren of Heraclius were redeemed from persecution, slavery, and exile; but instead of the Roman eagles, the true wood of the holy cross was restored to the importunate demands of the successor of Constantine. The victor was not ambitious of enlarging the weakness of the empire; the son of Chosroes abandoned without regret the conquests of his father; the Persians who evacuated the cities of Syria and Egypt were honourably conducted to the frontier, and a war which had wounded the vitals of the two monarchies, produced no change in their external and relative situation. The return of Heraclius from Tauris to Constantinople was a perpetual triumph; and after the exploits of six glorious campaigns, he peaceably enjoyed the sabbath of his toils. After a long impatience, the senate, the clergy, and the people, went forth to meet

[628–629 A.D.]

their hero, with tears and acclamations, with olive-branches and innumerable lamps; he entered the capital in a chariot drawn by four elephants; and as soon as the emperor could disengage himself from the tumult of public joy, he tasted more genuine satisfaction in the embraces of his mother and his son.

The succeeding year was illustrated by a triumph of a very different kind, the restitution of the true cross to the Holy Sepulchre. Heraclius performed in person the pilgrimage of Jerusalem, the identity of the relic was verified by the discreet patriarch, and this august ceremony has been commemorated by the annual festival of the exaltation of the cross. Before the emperor presumed to tread the consecrated ground, he was instructed to strip himself of the diadem and purple, the pomp and vanity of the world: but in the judgment of his clergy, the persecution of the Jews was more easily reconciled with the precepts of the Gospel. He again ascended his throne to receive the congratulations of the ambassadors of France and India: and the fame of Moses, Alexander, and Hercules was eclipsed, in the popular estimation, by the superior merit and glory of the great Heraclius. Yet the deliverer of the East was indigent and feeble. Of the Persian spoils, the most valuable portion had been expended in the war, distributed to the soldiers, or buried, by an unlucky tempest, in the waves of the Euxine.

The conscience of the emperor was oppressed by the obligation of restoring the wealth of the clergy, which he had borrowed for their own defence; a perpetual fund was required to satisfy these inexorable creditors; the provinces, already wasted by the arms and avarice of the Persians, were compelled to a second payment of the same taxes; and the arrears of a simple citizen, the treasurer of Damascus, were commuted to a fine of one hundred thousand pieces of gold. The loss of two hundred thousand soldiers who had fallen by the sword, was of less fatal importance than the decay of arts, agriculture, and population, in this long and destructive war: and although a victorious army had been formed under the standard of Heraclius, the unnatural effort appears to have exhausted rather than exercised their strength. While the emperor triumphed at Constantinople or Jerusalem, an obscure town on the confines of Syria was pillaged by the Saracens, and they cut in pieces some troops who advanced to its relief: an ordinary and trifling occurrence, had it not been the prelude of a mighty revolution. These robbers were the apostles of Mohammed; their fanatic valour had emerged from the desert; and in the last eight years of his reign Heraclius lost to the Arabs the same provinces which he had rescued from the Persians.[b]

## CHAPTER VI. HERACLIUS AND HIS SUCCESSORS

[610–717 A.D.]

"EVERYONE who reads the history of Heraclius," says Bury,[b] "is met by the problems: how did the great hero of the last Persian War spend the first ten years of his reign; and why did he relapse into lethargy after his final triumph?"

Many explanations have been attempted to account for the actions of this man, who first built up an empire, and then allowed it to crumble under his feet. Bury's explanation is the assumption that his will was naturally weak and his sensibilities strong, and that for a time he was raised above himself, as it were, by an inspired enthusiasm. When in later years this cloak of enthusiasm was withdrawn, the weakness of his true character was laid bare.[a]

The reign of Heraclius is one of the most remarkable epochs, both in the history of the empire and in the annals of mankind. It warded off the almost inevitable destruction of the Roman government for another century; it laid the foundation of that policy which prolonged the existence of the imperial power at Constantinople under a new modification, as the Byzantine monarchy; and it was contemporary with the commencement of the great moral change in the condition of the people which transformed the language and manners of the ancient world into those of modern nations. The Eastern Empire was indebted to the talents of Heraclius for its escape from those ages of barbarism which, for many centuries, prevailed in all western Europe. No period of society could offer a field for instructive study more likely to present practical results to the highly civilised political communities of modern Europe; yet there is no time of which the existing memorials of the constitution and frame of society are so imperfect and unsatisfactory.

It was perhaps a misfortune for mankind that Heraclius was by birth a Roman rather than a Greek, as his views were from that accident directed to the maintenance of the imperial dominion, without any reference to the national organisation of his people. His civilisation, like that of a large portion of the ruling class in the Eastern Empire, was too far removed from the state of ignorance into which the mass of the population had fallen, for the one to be influenced by the feelings of the other, or for both to act together with the energy conferred by unity of purpose in a variety of ranks. Hera-

clius, being by birth and family connections an African noble, must have regarded himself as of pure Roman blood, superior to all national prejudices, and bound by duty and policy to repress the domineering spirit of the Greek aristocracy in the state, and of the Greek hierarchy in the church.

Language and manners began to give to national feelings almost as much power in forming men into distinct societies as political arrangements. The influence of the clergy followed the divisions established by language, rather than the political organisation adopted by the government: and as the clergy now formed the most popular and the ablest portion of society, the church exerted more influence over the minds of the people than the civil administration and the imperial power, even though the emperor was the acknowledged sovereign and master of the patriarchs and the pope.

It is necessary to observe here, that the established church of the empire had ceased to be the universal Christian church. The Greeks had rendered themselves the depositaries of its power and influence; they had already corrupted Christianity into the Greek church; and other nations were rapidly forming separate ecclesiastical societies to supply their own spiritual wants. The Armenians, Syrians, and Egyptians were induced by national aversion to the ecclesiastical tyranny of the Greeks, as well as by spiritual preference of the doctrines of Nestorius and Eutyches, to oppose the established church. At the time Heraclius ascended the throne, these national and religious feelings already exercised their power of modifying the operations of the Roman government, and of enabling mankind to advance one step towards the establishment of individual liberty and intellectual independence.

In order fully to comprehend the lamentable state of weakness to which the empire was reduced, it will be necessary to take a cursory view of the condition of the different provinces. The continual ravages of the barbarians who occupied the country beyond the Danube has extended as far as the southern shores of the Peloponnesus. The agricultural population was almost exterminated, except where it was protected by the immediate vicinity of fortified towns, or secured by the fastnesses of the mountains. The inhabitants of all the countries between the Archipelago and the Adriatic had been greatly diminished, and fertile provinces remained everywhere desolate, ready to receive new occupants. As great part of these countries yielded very little revenue to the government, they were considered by the court of Constantinople as of hardly any value, except in so far as they covered the capital from hostile attacks, or commanded the commercial routes to the west of Europe. At this time the Indian and Chinese trade had in part been forced round the north of the Caspian Sea, in consequence of the Persian conquests in Syria and Egypt, and the disturbed state of the country immediately to the east of Persia. The rich produce transported by the caravans, which reached the northern shores of the Black Sea, was then transported to Constantinople, and from thence distributed through western Europe.

Under these circumstances, Thessalonica and Dyrrhachium became points of great consequence to the empire, and were successfully defended by the emperor amidst all his calamities. These two cities commanded the extremities of the usual road between Constantinople and Ravenna, and connected the towns on the Archipelago with the Adriatic and with Rome. The open country was abandoned to the Avars and Slavonians, who were allowed to effect permanent settlements even to the south of the Via Egnatia; but none of these settlements were suffered to interfere with the

lines of communication, without which the imperial influence in Italy would have been soon annihilated, and the trade of the West lost to the Greeks. The ambition of the barbarians was inclined to dare any attempt to encroach on the wealth of the Eastern Empire, and they tried to establish a system of maritime depredations in the Archipelago; but Heraclius was able to frustrate their schemes, though it is probable that he owed his success more to the exertions of the mercantile population of the Greek cities than to the exploits of his own troops.

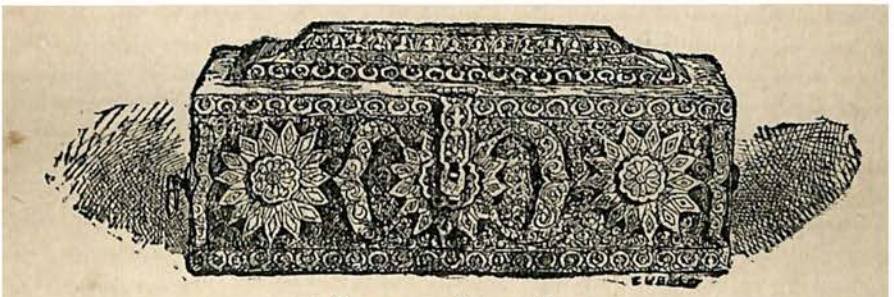
National distinctions and religious interests tended to divide the population, and to balance political power, much more in Italy than in the other countries of Europe. The influence of the church in protecting the people, the weakness of the Lombard sovereigns, from the small numerical strength of the Lombard population, and the oppressive fiscal government of the Roman exarchs, gave the Italians the means of creating a national existence, amidst the conflicts of their masters. Yet so imperfect was the unity of interests, or so great were the difficulties of communication between the people of various parts of Italy, that the imperial authority not only defended its own dominions with success against foreign enemies, but also repressed with ease the ambitious or patriotic attempts of the popes to acquire political power, and punished equally the seditions of the people and the rebellions of the chiefs, who, like Joannes Compsa of Neapolis and the exarch Eleutherinus, aspired at independence.

Africa alone, of all the provinces of the empire, continued to use the Latin language in ordinary life; and its inhabitants regarded themselves, with some reason, as the purest descendants of the Romans. After the victories of Johannes the Patrician, it had enjoyed a long period of tranquillity, and its prosperity was undisturbed by any spirit of nationality adverse to the supremacy of the empire, or by schismatic opinions hostile to the church. The barbarous tribes to the south were feeble enemies, and no foreign state possessed a naval force capable of troubling its repose or interrupting its commerce. Under the able and fortunate administration of Heraclius and Gregoras, the father and uncle of the emperor, Africa formed the most flourishing portion of the empire. Its prosperous condition, and the wars raging in other countries, threw great part of the commerce of the Mediterranean into the hands of the Africans. Wealth and population increased to such a degree that the naval expedition of the emperor Heraclius, and the army of his cousin Nicetas, were fitted out from the resources of Africa alone. Another strong proof of the prosperity of the province, of its importance to the empire, and of its attachment to the interests of the Heraclian family is afforded by the resolution which the emperor adopted, in the ninth year of his reign, of transferring the imperial residence from Constantinople to Carthage.

In Constantinople an immense body of idle inhabitants had been collected, a mass that had long formed a burden on the state, and acquired a right to a portion of its resources. A numerous nobility, and a permanent imperial household, conceived that they formed a portion of the Roman government from the prominent part which they acted in the ceremonial that connected the emperor with the people. Thus, the great natural advantages of the geographical position of the capital were neutralised by moral and political causes; while the desolate state of the European provinces, and the vicinity of the northern frontier, began to expose it to frequent sieges. As a fortress and place of arms, it might still have formed the bulwark of the empire in Europe; but while it remained the capital, its immense unproductive

population required that too large a part of the resources of the state should be devoted to supplying it with provisions, to guarding against the factions and the seditions of its populace, and to maintaining in it a powerful garrison. The luxury of the Roman court had, during ages of unbounded wealth and unlimited power, assembled round the emperor an infinity of courtly offices, and caused an enormous expenditure, which it was extremely dangerous to suppress and impossible to continue.

No national feelings or particular line of policy connected Heraclius with Constantinople, and his frequent absence during the active years of his life indicates that, as long as his personal energy and health allowed him to direct the public administration, he considered the constant residence of the emperor in that city injurious to the general interests of the state. On the other hand, Carthage was, at this time, peculiarly a Roman city; and in actual wealth, in the numbers of its independent citizens, and in the activity of its whole population, was probably inferior to no city in the empire. It is not surprising, therefore, that Heraclius, when compelled to suppress the public distributions of bread in the capital, to retrench the expenditure of his court and make many reforms in his civil government, should have wished to place the imperial treasury and his own resources in a place of greater security,



A SARACENIC METAL CASKET

before he engaged in his desperate struggle with Persia. The wish, therefore, to make Carthage the capital of the Roman Empire may, with far greater probability, be connected with the gallant project of his eastern campaigns, than with the cowardly or selfish motives attributed to him by the Byzantine writers. Carthage offered military resources for recovering possession of Egypt and Syria, of which we can only now estimate the extent by taking into consideration the expedition that placed Heraclius himself on the throne. Many reasons connected with the constitution of the civil government of the empire might likewise be adduced as tending to influence the preference.

## THE PROVINCES UNDER HERACLIUS

Egypt, from its wonderful natural resources and its numerous and industrious population, had long been the most valuable province of the empire. It poured a very great portion of its gross produce into the imperial treasury; for its agricultural population, being destitute of all political power and influence, were compelled to pay, not only taxes, but a tribute, which was viewed as a rent for the soil, to the Roman government. At this time, however, the wealth of Egypt was on the decline. The circumstances which had driven the trade of India to the north, had caused a great decrease in the demand for the grain of Egypt on the shores of the Red Sea, and for its

manufactures in Arabia and Ethiopia. The canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, whose existence is intimately connected with the prosperity of these countries, had been neglected during the government of Phocas.

A large portion of the Greek population of Alexandria had been ruined, because an end had been put to the public distributions of grain, and poverty had invaded the fertile land of Egypt. Joannes the Almsgiver, who was patriarch and imperial prefect in the reign of Heraclius, did everything in his power to alleviate this misery. He established hospitals, and devoted the revenues of his see to charity; but he was an enemy to heresy, and consequently he was hardly looked on as a friend by the native population. National feelings, religious opinions, and local interests, had always nourished, in the minds of the native Egyptians, a deep-rooted hatred of the Roman administration and of the Greek church; and this feeling of hostility only became more concentrated after the union of the offices of prefect and patriarch by Justinian. A complete line of separation existed between the Greek colony of Alexandria and the native population, who, during the decline of the Greeks and Jews of Alexandria, intruded themselves into political business, and gained some degree of official importance. The cause of the emperor was now connected with the commercial interests of the Greek and Melchite parties, but these ruling classes were regarded by the agricultural population of the rest of the province as interlopers on their sacred Jacobite soil. Joannes the Almsgiver, though a Greek patriarch and an imperial prefect, was not perfectly free from the charge of heresy, nor, perhaps, of employing the revenues under his control with more attention to charity than to public utility.

The exigencies of Heraclius were so great that he sent his cousin the patrician Nicetas to Egypt, in order to seize the immense wealth which the patriarch Joannes was said to possess. In the following year the Persians invaded the province; and the patrician and patriarch, unable to defend even the city of Alexandria, fled to Cyprus, while the enemy was allowed to subdue the valley of the Nile to the borders of Libya and Ethiopia, without meeting any opposition from the imperial forces, and apparently with the good wishes of the Egyptians. The plunder obtained from public property and slaves was immense; and as the power of the Greeks was annihilated, the native Egyptians availed themselves of the opportunity to acquire a dominant influence in the administration of their country.

For ten years the province owned allegiance to Persia, though it enjoyed a certain degree of doubtful independence under the immediate government of a native intendant-general of the land revenues named Mokaukas, who subsequently, at the time of the Saracen conquest, acted a conspicuous part in the history of his country. During the Persian supremacy, he became so influential in the administration that he is styled by several writers the prince of Egypt. Mokaukas, under the Roman government, had conformed to the established church, in order to hold an official situation, but he was, like most of his countrymen, at heart a monophysite, and consequently inclined to oppose the imperial administration, both from religious and political motives. Yet it appears that a portion of the monophysite clergy steadily refused to submit to the Persian government; and Benjamin their patriarch retired from his residence at Alexandria when that city fell into the hands of the Persians, and did not return until Heraclius had recovered possession of Egypt.

Mokaukas established himself in the city of Babylon, or Misr, which had grown up, on the decline of Memphis, to be the native capital of the

province and the chief city in the interior. The moment appears to have been extremely favourable for the establishment of an independent state by the monophysite Egyptians, since, amidst the conflicts of the Persian and Roman empires, the immense revenues and supplies of grain formerly paid to the emperor might have been devoted to the defence of the country. But the native population appears, from the conduct of the patriarch Benjamin, not to have been united in its views; and probably the agricultural classes, though numerous, living in abundance, and firm in their monophysite tenets, had not the knowledge necessary to aspire at national independence, the strength of character required to achieve it, or the command of the precious metals necessary to purchase the service of mercenary troops and provide the materials of war. They had been so long deprived of arms and of all political rights, that they had probably adopted the opinion prevalent among the subjects of all despotic governments, that public functionaries are invariably knaves, and that the oppression of the native is more grievous than the yoke of a stranger. The moral defects of the people could certainly, at this favourable conjuncture, alone have prevented the establishment of an independent Egyptian and Jacobite state.

It is said that about this time a prophecy was current, which declared that the Roman Empire would be overthrown by a circumcised people. This report may have been spread by the Jews, in order to excite their own ardour and assist their projects of rebellion; but the prophecy was saved from oblivion by the subsequent conquests of the Saracens, which could never have been foreseen by its authors. The conduct of the Jews excited the bigotry, as it may have awakened the fears, of the imperial government, and both Phocas and Heraclius attempted to exterminate the Jewish religion and if possible to put an end to the national existence. Heraclius not only practised every species of cruelty himself to effect this object within the bounds of his own dominions, but he even made the forced conversion or banishment of the Jews a prominent feature in his diplomacy. He consoled himself for the loss of most of the Roman possessions in Spain, by inducing Sisibut to insert an article in the treaty of peace concluded in 614, engaging the Gothic monarch to force baptism on the Jews; and he considered that, even though he failed in persuading the Franks to co-operate with him against the Avars, in the year 620, he had rendered the empire and Christianity some service by inducing Dagobert to join in the project of exterminating the unfortunate Jews.

Asia Minor had become the chief seat of the Roman power in the time of Heraclius, and the only portion in which the majority of the population was attached to the imperial government and to the Greek church. Before the reign of Phocas, it had escaped any extensive devastation, so that it still retained much of its ancient wealth and splendour; and the social life of the people was still modelled on the institutions and usages of preceding ages. A considerable internal trade was carried on; and the great roads, being kept in a tolerable state of repair, served as arteries for the circulation of commerce and civilisation. That it had, nevertheless, suffered very severely in the general decline caused by over-taxation, and by reduced commerce, neglected agriculture, and diminished population, is attested by the magnificent ruins of cities which had already fallen to decay, and which never again recovered their ancient prosperity.

The power of the central administration over its immediate officers was almost as completely destroyed in Asia Minor as in the more distant provinces of the empire. A remarkable proof of this general disorganisation of

the government is found in the history of the early years of the reign of Heraclius; and one deserving particular attention from its illustrating both his personal character and the state of the empire. Crispus, the son-in-law of Phocas, had materially assisted Heraclius in obtaining the throne; and as a recompense, he was charged with the administration of Cappadocia, one of the richest provinces of the empire, along with the chief command of the troops in his government. Crispus, a man of influence, and of a daring, heedless character, soon ventured to act, not only with independence, but even with insolence, towards the emperor. He neglected the defence of his province; and when Heraclius visited Cæsarea to examine into its state and prepare the means of carrying on the war against Persia in person, he displayed a spirit of insubordination and an assumption of importance which amounted to treason. Heraclius, who possessed the means of restraining his fiery temperament, visited the too-powerful officer in his bed, which he kept under a slight or affected illness, and persuaded him to visit Constantinople. On his appearance in the senate, he was arrested, and compelled to become a monk. His authority and position rendered it absolutely necessary for Heraclius to punish his presumption, before he could advance with safety against the Persians.

Many less important personages, in various parts of the empire, acted with equal independence, without the emperor's considering that it was either necessary to observe, or prudent to punish, their ambition. The decline of the power of the central government, the increasing ignorance of the people, the augmented difficulties in the way of communication, and the general insecurity of property and life, effected extensive changes in the state of society, and threw political influence into the hands of the local governors, the municipal and provincial chiefs, and the whole body of the clergy.

### BARRIERS AGAINST THE NORTHERN BARBARIANS

Heraclius appears to have formed the plan of establishing a permanent barrier in Europe against the encroachments of the Avars and Slavonians. For the furtherance of this project, it was evident that he could derive no assistance from the inhabitants of the provinces to the south of the Danube. The imperial armies, too, which in the time of Maurice had waged an active war in Illyricum and Thrace and frequently invaded the territories of the Avars, had melted away during the disorders of the reign of Phocas. The loss was irreparable; for in Europe no agricultural population remained to supply the recruits required to form a new army.

The only feasible plan for circumscribing the ravages of the northern enemies of the empire which presented itself, was the establishment of powerful colonies of tribes hostile to the Avars and their eastern Slavonian allies, in the deserted provinces of Dalmatia and Illyricum. To accomplish this object Heraclius induced the Serbs, or western Slavonians, who occupied the country about the Carpathian Mountains and who had successfully opposed the extension of the Avar empire in that direction, to abandon their ancient seats, and move down to the south into the provinces between the Adriatic and the Danube. The Roman and Greek population of these provinces had been driven towards the sea coast by the continual incursions of the northern tribes, and the desolate plains of the interior had been occupied by a few Slavonian subjects and vassals of the Avars. The most important of the western Slavonian tribes who moved southward at the invitation of

[610-641 A.D.]

Heraclius were the Servians and Croatians, who settled in the countries still peopled by their descendants. Their original settlements were formed in consequence of friendly arrangements, and, doubtless, under the sanction of an express treaty; for the Slavonian people of Illyricum and Dalmatia long regarded themselves as bound to pay a certain degree of territorial allegiance to the Eastern Empire.

The measures of Heraclius were carried into execution with skill and vigour. From the borders of Istria to the territory of Dyrrhachium, the whole country was occupied by a variety of tribes of Servian or western Slavonic origin, hostile to the Avars. These colonies, unlike the earlier invaders of the empire, were composed of agricultural communities; and to the facility which this circumstance afforded them of adopting into their political system any remnant of the old Slavonic population of their conquests, it seems just to attribute the permanency and prosperity of their settlements. Unlike the military races of Goths, Huns, and Avars, who had preceded them, the Servian nations increased and flourished in the lands which they had colonised; and by the absorption of every relic of the ancient population, they formed political communities and independent states, which offered a firm barrier to the Avars and other hostile nations.

A SARACEN

The fame of Heraclius would have rivalled that of Alexander, Hannibal, or Cæsar, had he expired at Jerusalem, after the successful termination of the Persian War. He had established peace throughout the empire, restored the strength of the Roman government, revived the power of Christianity in the East, and replanted the holy cross on Mount Calvary. His glory admitted of no addition. Unfortunately, the succeeding years of his reign have, in the general opinion, tarnished his fame. Yet these years were devoted to many arduous labours; and it is to the wisdom with which he restored the strength of his government during this time of peace that we must attribute the energy of the Asiatic Greeks who arrested the great tide of Mohammedan conquest at the foot of Mount Taurus. Though the military glory of Heraclius was obscured by the brilliant victories of the Saracens, still his civil administration ought to receive its meed of praise, when we compare the resistance made by the empire which he reorganised with the facility which the followers of Mohammed found in extending their conquests over every other land from India to Spain.

## RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES OF HERACLIUS

The policy of Heraclius was directed to the establishment of a bond of union, which should connect all the provinces of his empire into one body, and he hoped to replace the want of national unity by identity of religious belief. The church was far more closely connected with the people than any other institution, and the emperor, as political head of the church,

hoped to direct a well-organised body of churchmen. But Heraclius engaged in the impracticable task of imposing a rule of faith on his subjects, without assuming the office, or claiming the authority of a prophet or a saint. His measures, consequently, like all ecclesiastical and religious reforms which are adopted solely from political motives, only produced additional discussions and difficulties. In the year 630, he propounded the doctrine that in Christ, after the union of the two natures, there was but one will and one operation. Without gaining over any great body of the schismatics whom he wished to restore to the communion of the established church by his new rule of faith, he was himself generally stigmatised as a heretic. The epithet Monothelite was applied to him and to his doctrine, to show that neither was orthodox.

In the hope of putting an end to the disputes which he had rashly awakened, he again, in 639, attempted to legislate for the church, and published his celebrated *Ecthesis*, which, though it attempts to remedy the effects of his prior proceedings, by forbidding all controversy on the question of the single or double operation of the will in Christ, nevertheless includes a declaration in favour of unity. The bishop of Rome, already aspiring after an increase of his spiritual authority, though perhaps not yet contemplating the possibility of perfect independence, entered actively into the opposition excited by the publication of the *Ecthesis*, and was supported by a considerable party in the Eastern church, while he directed the proceedings of the whole of the Western clergy.

On a careful consideration of the religious position of the empire, it cannot appear surprising that Heraclius should have endeavoured to reunite the Nestorians, Eutychians, and Jacobites to the established church, particularly when we remember how closely the influence of the church was connected with the administration of the state, and how completely religious passions replaced national feelings in these secondary ages of Christianity. The union was an indispensable step to the re-establishment of the imperial power in the provinces of Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Armenia; and it must not be overlooked that the theological speculations and ecclesiastical reforms of Heraclius were approved of by the wisest councillors whom he had been able to select to aid him in the government of the empire. The state of society required some strong remedy, and Heraclius only erred in adopting the plan which had always been pursued by absolute monarchs, namely, that of making the sovereign's opinion the rule of conduct for his subjects. We can hardly suppose that Heraclius would have succeeded better, had he assumed the character or deserved the veneration due to a saint.

The marked difference which existed between the higher and educated classes in the East, and the ignorant and superstitious populace, rendered it next to impossible that any line of conduct could secure the judgment of the learned, and awaken the fanaticism of the people. As a further apology for Heraclius it may be noticed that his acknowledged power over the orthodox clergy was much greater than that which was possessed by the Byzantine emperors at a later period, or that which was admitted by the Latin church after its separation. In spite of all the advantages which he possessed, his attempt ended in a most signal failure; yet no experience could ever induce his successors to avoid his error. His effort to strengthen his power by establishing a principle of unity, aggravated all the evils which he intended to cure; for while the monophysites and the Greeks were as little disposed to unite as ever, the authority of the Eastern church, as a body, was weakened by the creation of a new schism, and the incipient divisions

[633-641 A.D.]

between the Greeks and the Latins, assuming a national character, began to prepare the way for the separation of the two churches.

While Heraclius was endeavouring to restore the strength of the empire in the East, and enforce unity of religious views, — the pursuit of which has ever been one of the greatest errors of the human mind, — Mohammed, by a juster application of the aspiration of mankind after unity, had succeeded in uniting Arabia into one state and in persuading it to adopt one religion. The force of this new empire of the Saracens was directed against those provinces of the Roman Empire which Heraclius had been anxiously endeavouring to reunite in spirit to his government. The difficulties of their administration had compelled the emperor to fix his residence for some years in Syria, and he was well aware of the uncertainty of their allegiance, before the Saracens commenced their invasion. The successes of the Mohammedan arms, and the retreat of the emperor, carrying off with him the holy cross from Jerusalem, have induced historians to suppose that his latter years were spent in sloth, and marked by weakness. His health, however, was in so precarious a state that he could no longer direct the operations of his army in person; at times, indeed, he was incapable of all bodily exertion. Yet the resistance which the Saracens encountered in Syria was very different from the ease with which it had yielded to the Persians at the commencement of the emperor's reign, and attests that his administration had not been without fruit.

Many of his reforms could only have been effected after the conclusion of the Persian War, when he recovered possession of Syria and Egypt. He seems indeed never to have omitted an opportunity of strengthening his position; and when a chief of the Huns or Bulgarians threw off his allegiance to the Avars, Heraclius is recorded to have immediately availed himself of the opportunity to form an alliance, in order to circumscribe the power of his dangerous northern enemy. Unfortunately, few traces can be gleaned from the Byzantine writers of the precise acts by which he effected his reforms; and the most remarkable facts, illustrating the political history of the time, must be collected from incidental notices, preserved in the treatise of the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, concerning the administration of the empire, written for the instruction of his son Romanus.

## WARS WITH THE MOHAMMEDANS

In the year 633 the Mohammedans invaded Syria, where their progress was rapid, although Heraclius himself was in the neighbourhood. The imperial troops made considerable effort to support the military renown of the Roman armies, but were almost universally unsuccessful. The emperor intrusted the command of the army to his brother Theodore, who had distinguished himself in the Persian wars. Vartan, who commanded after Theodore, had also distinguished himself in the last glorious campaign in Persia. [As we have already said] the health of Heraclius prevented his taking the field in person, and the absence of all moral checks in the Roman administration, and the total want of patriotism in the officers and troops at this period, rendered the personal influence of the emperor necessary at the head of his armies in order to preserve due subordination, and enforce union among the leading men of the empire.

Towards the end of the year 633, the troops of Abu Bekr laid siege to Bostra, a strong frontier town of Syria, which was surrendered early in the

following year by the treachery of its governor. During the campaign of 634 the Roman armies were defeated at Adjnadin, in the south of Palestine, and at a bloody and decisive battle on the banks of the river Yermouk, in which it is said that the imperial troops were commanded by the emperor's brother Theodore. Theodore was replaced by Vartan, but the rebellion of Vartan's army and another defeat terminated this general's career. In the third year of the war the Saracens gained possession of Damascus by capitulation, and they guaranteed to the inhabitants the full exercise of their municipal privileges, allowed them to use their local mint, and left the orthodox in possession of the great church of St. John. About the same time, Heraclius quitted Edessa and returned to Constantinople, carrying with him the holy cross which he had recovered from the Persians, and deposited at Jerusalem with great solemnity only six years before, but which he now considered it necessary to remove into Europe for greater safety. His son, Heraclius Constantine, who had received the imperial title when an infant, remained in Syria to supply his place and direct the military operations for the defence of the province. Wherever the imperial garrison was not sufficient to overawe the inhabitants, the native Syrians sought to make any arrangement with the Arabs which would insure their towns from plunder, feeling satisfied that the Arab authorities could not use their power with greater rapacity and cruelty than the imperial officers. The Romans still retained some hope of reconquering Syria, until the loss of another decisive battle in the year 636 compelled them to abandon the province. In the following year, 637 A.D., the Arabs advanced to Jerusalem, and the surrender of the Holy City was marked by arrangements between the patriarch Sophronius and the caliph Omar. The facility with which the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius, at this time, and the patriarch of Constantinople, Gennaddius, at the time of the conquest of the Byzantine Empire by Muhammed II (1453 A.D.), became the ministers of their Mohammedan conquerors, shows the slight hold which national feelings retained over the minds of the orthodox Greek clergy. Heraclius concentrated an army at Amida (Diarbekr) in the year 638, which made a bold attempt to regain possession of the north of Syria. Emesa was besieged; but the Saracens soon assembled an overwhelming force; the Romans were defeated, the conquest of Syria was completed.

The Arab conquest not only put an end to the political power of the Romans, which had lasted seven hundred years, but it also soon rooted out every trace of the Greek civilisation introduced by the conquests of Alexander the Great, and which had flourished in the country for upwards of nine centuries. The year after Syria was subdued, Mesopotamia was invaded, and proved an easy conquest.

As soon as the Arabs had completed the conquest of Syria, they invaded Egypt. The emperor Heraclius sent an Armenian governor, Manuel, with a body of troops, to defend the province. The fortune of the Arabs again prevailed, and the Roman army was defeated. If the accounts of historians can be relied on, it would seem that the population of Egypt had suffered less from the vicious administration of the Roman Empire, and from the Persian invasion, than any other part of their dominions; for about the time of its conquest by the Romans it contained seven millions and a half, exclusive of Alexandria, and its population was now estimated at six millions.

A year after Amru had completed the conquest of Egypt, he had established the water communication between the Nile and the Red Sea: and, by sending large supplies of grain by the canal to Suez, he was able to relieve the

inhabitants of Mecca, who were suffering from famine. After more than one interruption from neglect, the policy of the caliphs of Baghdad allowed it to fall into decay, and it was filled up by Almansor, 762–767 A.D.

As soon as the Arabs had settled the affairs of the native population, they laid siege to Alexandria. This city made a vigorous defence, and Heraclius exerted himself to succour it; but, though it held out for several months, it was at last taken by the Arabs, for the troubles which occurred at Constantinople after the death of Heraclius prevented the Roman government from sending reinforcements to the garrison. The confidence of the Saracens induced them to leave a feeble corps for its defence after they had taken it; and the Roman troops, watching an opportunity for renewing the war, recovered the city, and massacred the Mohammedans, but were soon compelled to retire to their ships, and make their escape. In less than five years (646 A.D.), a Roman army, sent by the emperor Constans under the command of Manuel, again recovered possession of Alexandria, by the assistance of the Greek inhabitants who had remained in the place; but the Mohammedans soon appeared before the city, and, with the assistance of the Egyptians, compelled the imperial troops to abandon their conquest.[1] The walls of Alexandria were thrown down, the Greek population driven out, and the commercial importance of the city destroyed. Thus perished one of the most remarkable colonies of the Greek nation, and one of the most renowned seats of that Greek civilisation of which Alexander the Great had laid the foundations in the East, after having flourished in the highest degree of prosperity for nearly a thousand years.

The conquest of Cyrenaïca followed the subjugation of Egypt as an immediate consequence. The Greeks are said to have planted their first colonies in this country 631 years before the Christian era, and twelve centuries of uninterrupted possession appeared to have constituted them the perpetual tenants of the soil; but the Arabs were very different masters from the Romans, and under their domination the Greek race soon became extinct in Africa. It is not necessary here to follow the Saracens in their farther conquests westward. In a short time both Latin and Greek civilisation was exterminated on the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Though Heraclius failed in gaining over the Syrians and Egyptians, yet he succeeded completely in reuniting the Greeks of Asia Minor to his government, and in attaching them to the empire. His success may be estimated from the failure of the Saracens in their attacks on the population of this province. The moment the Mohammedan armies were compelled to rely on their military skill and religious enthusiasm, and were unable to derive any profit from the hostile feeling of the inhabitants to the imperial government, their career of conquest was checked; and almost a century before Charles Martel stopped their progress in the west of Europe, the Greeks had arrested their conquests in the East, by the steady resistance which they offered in Asia Minor.

The difficulties of Heraclius were very great. The Roman armies were still composed of a rebellious soldiery collected from many discordant nations; and the only leaders whom the emperor could venture to trust with important military commands, were his immediate relations, like his brother Theodore and his son Heraclius Constantine, or soldiers of fortune who could not aspire at the imperial dignity. The apostasy and treachery of a considerable number of the Roman officers in Syria warranted Heraclius in

[1] Eutychius, 2, 339. Ockley, i. 325.

regarding the defence of that province as utterly hopeless; but the meagre historians of his reign can hardly be received as conclusive authorities, to prove that on his retreat he displayed an unseemly despair, or a criminal indifference. The fact that he carried the holy cross, which he had restored to Jerusalem, along with him to Constantinople, attests that he had lost all expectation of defending the Holy City; but his exclamation of "Farewell, Syria!" was doubtless uttered in the bitterness of his heart, on seeing a great part of the labours of his life for the restoration of the Roman Empire utterly vain.

The disease which had long undermined his constitution finally put an end to his life about five years after his return to Constantinople. He died in March, 641, after one of the most remarkable reigns recorded in history, chequered by the greatest successes and reverses, during which the social condition of mankind underwent a considerable change, and the germs of modern society began to sprout; yet there is, unfortunately, no period of man's annals covered with greater obscurity.

## THE REIGN OF CONSTANS II (641-668 A.D.)

After the death of Heraclius, the short reigns of his sons, Constantine III, or Heraclius Constantine, and Heracleonas, were disturbed by court intrigues and the disorders which naturally result from the want of a settled law of succession. In such conjunctures the people and the courtiers learn alike to traffic in sedition. Before the termination of the year in which Heraclius died, his grandson Constans II mounted the imperial throne at the age of eleven, in consequence of the death of his father Constantine, and the dethronement of his uncle Heracleonas.[1] An oration made by the young prince to the senate after his accession, in which he invoked the aid of that body, and spoke of their power in terms of reverence, warrants the conclusion that the aristocracy had again recovered its influence over the imperial administration; and that, though the emperor's authority was still held to be absolute by the constitution of the empire, it was really controlled by the influence of the persons holding ministerial offices.[2]

Constans grew up to be a man of considerable abilities and of an energetic character, but possessed of violent passions, and destitute of all the amiable feelings of humanity. The early part of his reign, during which the imperial ministers were controlled by the selfish aristocracy, was marked by the loss of several portions of the empire. The Lombards extended their conquests in Italy from the maritime Alps to the frontiers of Tuscany; and the exarch of Ravenna was defeated with considerable loss near Mutina; but still they were unable to make any serious impression on the exarchate. Armenia was compelled to pay tribute to the Saracens. Cyprus was rendered tributary to the caliph, though the amount of the tribute imposed was only seventy-two hundred pieces of gold — half of what it had previously paid to the emperor. This trifling sum can have hardly amounted to the moiety of the surplus usually paid into the imperial treasury after all the expenses of the local government were defrayed, and cannot have borne any relation to the amount of taxation levied by the Roman emperors.

[1 At Constans' coronation a compact was made with the army under whose terms Heracleonas' brother David was crowned emperor, and assumed the name of Tiberius. "What became of the emperor Tiberius," says Bury,[b] "we are not informed."]

[2 It is found in Theophanes.[a]]

## RELIGIOUS FEUDS

As soon as Constans was old enough to assume the direction of public business, the two great objects of his policy were the establishment of the absolute power of the emperor over the orthodox church, and the recovery of the lost provinces of the empire. With the view of obtaining and securing a perfect control over the ecclesiastical affairs of his dominions, he published an edict, called the *Type*, in the year 648, when he was only eighteen years old. It was prepared by Paul the patriarch of Constantinople and was intended to terminate the disputes produced by the *Ecthesis* of Heraclius. All parties were commanded by the *Type* to observe a profound silence on the previous quarrels concerning the operation of the will in Christ. Liberty of conscience was an idea almost unknown to any but the Mohammedans, so that Constans never thought of appealing to any such right; and no party in the Christian church was inclined to waive its orthodox authority of enforcing its own opinions upon others.

ROBES OF A POPE OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY

The Latin church, led by the bishop of Rome, was always ready to oppose the Greek clergy, who enjoyed the favour of the imperial court, and this jealousy engaged the pope in violent opposition to the *Type*. But the bishop of Rome was not then so powerful as the popes became at a subsequent period, so that he durst not attempt directly to question the authority of the emperor in regulating such matters. Perhaps it appeared to him hardly prudent to rouse the passions of a young prince of eighteen, who might prove not very bigoted in his attachment to any party, as, indeed, the provisions of the *Type* seemed to indicate.

The pope Theodore therefore directed the whole of his ecclesiastical fury against the patriarch of Constantinople, whom he excommunicated with circumstances of singular and impressive violence. He descended with his clergy into the dark tomb of St. Peter in the Vatican, now under the centre of the dome in the vault of the great cathedral of Christendom, consecrated the sacred cup, and, having dipped his pen in the blood of Christ, signed an act of excommunication, condemning a brother bishop to the pains of hell. To this indecent proceeding Paul the patriarch replied by persuading the emperor to persecute the clergy who adhered to the pope's opinion, in a more regular and legal manner, by depriving them of their temporalities, and condemning them to banishment.

The pope was supported by nearly the whole body of the Latin clergy, and even by a considerable party in the East; yet, when Martin, the successor of Theodore, ventured to anathematise the *Ecthesis* and the *Type*, he

was seized by order of Constans, conveyed to Constantinople, tried, and condemned on a charge of having supported the rebellion of the exarch Olympius, and of having remitted money to the Saracens. The emperor, at the intercession of the patriarch Paul, commuted his punishment to exile, and the pope died in banishment at Cherson in Tauris. Though Constans did not succeed in inculcating his doctrines on the clergy, he completely succeeded in enforcing public obedience to his decrees in the church, and the fullest acknowledgment of his supreme power over the persons of the clergy. These disputes between the heads of the ecclesiastical administration of the Greek and Latin churches afforded an excellent pretext for extending the breach, which had its real origin in national feelings and clerical interests, and was only widened by the difficult and not very intelligible distinctions of monothelitism. Constans himself, by his vigour and personal activity in this struggle, incurred the bitter hatred of a large portion of the clergy, and his conduct has been unquestionably the object of much misrepresentation and calumny.

### THE GROWING DANGER FROM THE SARACENS

The attention of Constans to ecclesiastical affairs induced him to visit Armenia, where his attempts to unite the people to his government by regulating the affairs of their church, were as unsuccessful as his religious interference elsewhere. Dissensions were increased; one of the imperial officers of high rank rebelled; and the Saracens availed themselves of this state of things to invade both Armenia and Cappadocia, and succeeded in rendering several districts tributary. The increasing power of Moawyah, the Arab general, induced him to form a project for the conquest of Constantinople, and he began to fit out a great naval expedition at Tripolis in Syria. A daring enterprise of two brothers, Christian inhabitants of the place, rendered the expedition abortive. These two Tripolitans and their partisans broke open the prisons in which the Roman captives were confined, and placing themselves at the head of an armed band which they had hastily formed, seized the city, slew the governor, and burned the fleet.

A second armament was at length prepared by the energy of Moawyah, and as it was reported to be directed against Constantinople, the emperor Constans took upon himself the command of his own fleet. He met the Saracen expedition off Mount Phœnix in Lycia and attacked it with great vigour. Twenty thousand Romans are said to have perished in the battle; and the emperor himself owed his safety to the valour of one of the Tripolitan brothers, whose gallant defence of the imperial galley enabled the emperor to escape before its valiant defender was slain and the vessel fell into the hands of the Saracens. The emperor retired to Constantinople, but the hostile fleet had suffered too much to attempt any further operations, and the expedition was abandoned for that year. The death of Othman, and the pretensions of Moawyah (or Muaviah) to the caliphate, withdrew the attention of the Arabs from the empire for a short time, and Constans turned his forces against the Slavonians, in order to deliver the European provinces from their ravages. They were totally defeated, numbers were carried off as slaves, and many were compelled to submit to the imperial authority. No certain grounds exist for determining whether this expedition was directed against the Slavonians who had established themselves between the Danube and Mount Hæmus, or against those who had settled in Macedonia. The name of no town is mentioned in the accounts of the campaign.

[658-665 A.D.]

When the affairs of the European provinces, in the vicinity of the capital, were tranquillised, Constans again prepared to engage the Arabs; and Moawyah, having need of all the forces he could command for his contest with Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed, consented to make peace, on terms which contrast curiously with the perpetual defeats which Constans is always represented by the orthodox historians of the empire to have suffered. The Saracens engaged to confine their forces within Syria and Mesopotamia, and Moawyah consented to pay Constans, for the cessation of hostilities, the sum of a thousand pieces of silver, and to furnish him with a slave and a horse for every day during which the peace should continue (659 A.D.).

During the subsequent year, Constans condemned to death his brother Theodosius, whom he had compelled to enter the priesthood. The cause of this crime, or the pretext for it, is not mentioned. From this brother's hand, the emperor had often received the sacrament; and the fratricide is supposed to have rendered a residence at Constantinople insupportable to the conscience of the criminal, who was reported nightly to behold the spectre of his brother offering him the consecrated cup, filled with human blood, and exclaiming, "Drink, brother!" Certain it is that, two years after his brother's death, Constans quitted his capital, with the intention of never returning; and he was only prevented, by an insurrection of the people, from carrying off the empress and his children. He meditated the reconquest of Italy from the Lombards, and proposed rendering Rome again the seat of empire. On his way to Italy the emperor stopped at Athens, where he assembled a considerable body of troops. This casual mention of Athens by Latin writers affords strong evidence of the tranquil, flourishing, and populous condition of the city and country around. The Slavonian colonies in Greece must, at this time, have owned perfect allegiance to the imperial power, or Constans would certainly have employed his army in reducing them to subjection. From Athens, the emperor sailed to Italy; he landed with his forces at Tarentum, and attempted to take Beneventum, the chief seat of the Lombard power in the south of Italy. His troops were twice defeated, and he then abandoned all his projects of conquest.

The emperor himself repaired to Rome. His visit lasted only a fortnight. According to the writers who describe the event, he consecrated twelve days to religious ceremonies and processions, and the remaining two he devoted to plundering the wealth of the church. His personal acquaintance with the affairs of Italy and the state of Rome, soon convinced him that the Eternal City was ill adapted for the capital of the empire, and he quitted it for Sicily, where he fixed on Syracuse for his future residence. Grimwald, the able monarch of the Lombards, and his son Romwald, the duke of Beneventum, continued the war in Italy with vigour. Brundusium and Tarentum were captured, and the Romans expelled from Calabria, so that Otranto and Gallipoli were the only towns on the eastern coast of which Constans retained possession.

When residing in Sicily Constans directed his attention to the state of Africa. His measures are not detailed with precision, but were evidently distinguished by the usual energy and caprice which marked his whole conduct. He recovered possession of Carthage, and of several cities which the Arabs had rendered tributary; but he displeased the inhabitants of the province, by compelling them to pay to himself the same amount of tribute as they had agreed by treaty to pay to the Saracens; and as Constans could not expel the Saracen forces from the province, the amount of the public taxes of the Africans was thus often doubled, since both parties were able to

levy the contributions which they demanded. Moawyah sent an army from Syria, and Constans one from Sicily, to decide who should become sole master of the country. A battle was fought near Tripolis; and though the army of Constans consisted of thirty thousand men, it was completely defeated. Yet the victorious army of the Saracens was unable to take the small town of Geloula (Usula), until the accidental fall of a portion of the ramparts laid it open to their assault; and this trifling conquest was followed by no farther success. In the East, the empire was exposed to greater danger, yet the enemies of Constans were eventually unsuccessful in their projects. In consequence of the rebellion of the Armenian troops, whose commander, Sapor, assumed the title of emperor, the Saracens made a successful incursion into Asia Minor, captured the city of Amorium, in Phrygia, and placed in it a garrison of five thousand men; but the imperial general appointed by Constans soon drove out this powerful garrison, and recovered the place.

It appears, therefore, that in spite of all the defeats which Constans is reported to have suffered, the empire underwent no very sensible diminution of its territory during his reign, and he certainly left its military forces in a more efficient condition than he found them. He was assassinated in a bath at Syracuse, by an officer of his own household, in the year 668, at the age of thirty-eight, after a reign of twenty-seven years. The fact of his having been murdered by one of his own household, joined to the capricious violence that marked many of his public acts, warrants the supposition that his character was of the unamiable and unsteady nature, which rendered the accusation of fratricide, so readily believed by his contemporaries, by no means impossible. It must, however, be admitted, that the occurrences of his reign afford irrefragable testimony that his heretical opinions have induced orthodox historians to give an erroneous colouring to many circumstances, since the undoubted results do not correspond with their descriptions of the passing events.

### REIGN OF CONSTANTINE IV (668–685 A.D.)

Constantine IV, called Pogonatus, or the Bearded, has been regarded by posterity with a high degree of favour. Yet his merit seems to have consisted in his superior orthodoxy, rather than in his superior talents as emperor. The concessions which he made to the see of Rome, and the moderation that he displayed in all ecclesiastical affairs, placed his conduct in strong contrast with the stern energy with which his father had enforced the subjection of the orthodox ecclesiastics to the civil power, and gained for him the praise of the priesthood, whose eulogies have exerted no inconsiderable influence on all historians. Constantine, however, was certainly an intelligent and just prince; he did not possess the stubborn determination and talents of his father, and was destitute also of his violent passions and imprudent character.

As soon as Constantine was informed of the murder of his father, and that a rebel had assumed the purple in Sicily, he hastened thither in person to avenge his death, and extinguish the rebellion. To satisfy his vengeance, the patrician Justinian, a man of high character, compromised in the rebellion, was treated with great severity, and his son Germanus with a degree of inhumanity that would have been recorded by the clergy against Constans as an instance of the grossest barbarity. The return of the emperor to Constantinople was signalised by a singular sedition of the troops in Asia Minor. They marched towards the capital, and having encamped on the Asiatic shores of the Bosporus, demanded that Constantine should admit his two

[668-681 A.D.]

brothers, on whom he had conferred the rank of augustus, to an equal share in the public administration, in order that the Holy Trinity in heaven, which governs the spiritual world, might be represented by a human trinity, to govern the political empire of the Christians. The very proposal is a proof of the complete supremacy of the civil over the ecclesiastical authority, in the eyes of the people, and the strongest evidence, that in the public opinion of the age the emperor was regarded as the head of the church. Such reasoning as the rebels used could be rebutted by no arguments, and Constantine had energy enough to hang the leaders of the sedition, and sufficient moderation not to molest his brothers. But, several years later, either from increased suspicions or from some intrigues on their part, he deprived them of the rank of augustus, and condemned them to have their noses cut off (681 A.D.). Theophanes[d] says that the brothers of Constantine IV lost their noses in 669, but were not deprived of the imperial title until 681.

## SARACEN WARS AND SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE (672 A.D.)

The great object of the imperial policy at this period was to oppose the progress of the Mohammedans. Constans had succeeded in arresting their conquests, but Constantine soon found that they would give the empire no rest unless he could secure it by his victories. He had hardly quitted Sicily to return to Constantinople, before an Arab expedition from Alexandria invaded the island and stormed the city of Syracuse, and, after plundering the treasures accumulated by Constans, immediately abandoned the place. In Africa the war was continued with various success, but the Christians were not long left without any succours from Constantine, while Moawyah supplied the Saracens with strong reinforcements. In spite of the courage and enthusiasm of the Mohammedans, the native Christian population maintained their ground with firmness, and carried on the war with such vigour that in the year 676 a native African leader, who commanded the united forces of the Romans and Berbers, captured the newly founded city of Kairowan, which at a subsequent period became renowned as the capital of the Fatimite caliphs.

SARACENIC METAL WORK BRAZIER

The ambition of the caliph Moawyah induced him to aspire at the conquest of the Roman Empire; and the military organisation of the Arabian power, which enabled the caliph to direct the whole resources of his dominions to any single object of conquest, seemed to promise success to the enterprise. A powerful expedition was sent to besiege Constantinople. The time required for the preparation of such an armament did not enable the Saracens to arrive at the Bosporus without passing a winter on the coast of Asia Minor; and on their arrival in the spring of the year 672, they found that the emperor had made every preparation for defence. Their forces, however, were so numerous that they were sufficient to invest Constantinople by sea and land. The troops occupied the whole of the land side of the triangle

on which the city is constructed, while the fleet effectually blockaded the port.

The Saracens failed in all their assaults, both by sea and land; but the Romans, instead of celebrating their own valour and discipline, attributed their success principally to the use of the Greek fire, which was invented shortly before this siege, and was first used on this occasion. The military art had declined during the preceding century, as rapidly as every other branch of national culture; and the resources of the mighty empire of the Arabs were so limited by the ignorance and bad administration of its rulers, that the caliph was unable to maintain his forces before Constantinople during the winter. The Saracen army was nevertheless enabled to collect sufficient supplies at Cyzicus to make that place a winter station, while their powerful fleet commanded the Hellespont and secured their communications with Syria. When spring returned, the fleet again transported the army to encamp under the walls of Constantinople. This strange mode of besieging cities, unattempted since the times the Dorians had invaded Peloponnesus, was continued for seven years; but in this warfare the Saracens suffered far more severely than the Romans, and were at last compelled to abandon their enterprise.

The land forces tried to effect their retreat through Asia Minor, but were entirely cut off in the attempt; and a tempest destroyed the greater part of their fleet off the coast of Pamphylia. During the time that this great body of his forces was employed against Constantinople, Moawyah sent a division of his troops to invade Crete, which had been visited by a Saracen army in 651. The island was now compelled to pay tribute, but the inhabitants were treated with great mildness, as it was the policy of the caliph at this time to conciliate the good opinion of the Christians by his liberal government, in order to pave the way for future conquests. Moawyah carried his religious tolerance so far as to rebuild the church of Edessa at the intercession of his Christian subjects.

The destruction of the Saracen expedition against Constantinople, and the advantage which the mountaineers of Lebanon had contrived to take of the absence of the Arab troops, by carrying their incursions into the plains of Syria, convinced Moawyah of the necessity of peace. The hardy mountaineers of Lebanon, called Mardaites, had been increased in numbers, and supplied with wealth, in consequence of the retreat into their country of a mass of native Syrians who had fled before the Arabs. They consisted chiefly of melchites and monothelites, and on that account they had adhered to the cause of the Roman Empire when the monophysites joined the Saracens. Their Syrian origin renders it probable that they were ancestors of the Maronites, though the desire of some Maronite historians to show that their countrymen were always perfectly orthodox has perplexed a question which of itself was by no means of easy solution. The political state of the empire required peace; and the orthodox Constantine did not feel personally inclined to run any risk in order to protect the monothelite mardaites. Peace was concluded between the emperor and the caliph in the year 678, Moawyah consenting to pay the Romans annually three thousand pounds of gold, fifty slaves, and fifty Arabian horses. It appears strange that a prince, possessing the power and resources at the command of Moawyah, should submit to these conditions; but the fact proves that policy, not pride, was the rule of the caliph's conduct, and that the advancement of his real power, and of the spiritual interests of the Mohammedan religion, were of more consequence in his eyes than any notions of earthly dignity.

[678-711 A.D.]

In the same year in which Moawyah had been induced to purchase peace by consenting to pay tribute to the Roman emperor, the foundations of the Bulgarian monarchy were laid, and the emperor Constantine himself was compelled to become tributary to a small horde of Bulgarians. One of the usual emigrations which take place amongst barbarous nations had induced Asparuch, a Bulgarian chief, to seize the low country about the mouth of the Danube; his power and activity obliged the emperor Constantine to take the field against these Bulgarians in person. The expedition was so ill conducted that it ended in the complete defeat of the Roman army, and the Bulgarians subdued all the country between the Danube and Mount Hæmus, compelling a district inhabited by a body of Slavonians, called the seven tribes, to become their tributaries. These Slavonians had once been formidable to the empire, but their power had been broken by the emperor Constans. Asparuch established himself in the town of Varna, near the ancient Odessus, and laid the foundation of the Bulgarian monarchy, a kingdom long engaged in hostilities with the emperors of Constantinople, and whose power tended greatly to accelerate the decline of the Greeks and reduce the numbers of their race in Europe.

The event, however, which exercised the most favourable influence on the internal condition of the empire during the reign of Constantine Pogonatus, was the assembly of the sixth general council of the church at Constantinople. This council was held under circumstances peculiarly favourable to candid discussion. The ecclesiastical power was not yet too strong to set both reason and the civil authorities at defiance. Its decisions were adverse to the monothelites; and the orthodox doctrine of two natures and two wills in Christ was received by the common consent of the Greek and Latin parties as the true rule of faith of the Christian church. Religious discussion had now taken a strong hold on public opinion, and as the majority of the Greek population had never adopted the opinions of the monothelites, the decisions of the sixth general council contributed powerfully to promote the union of the Greeks with the imperial administration.

## JUSTINIAN II (685 A.D.)

Justinian II succeeded his father Constantine at the age of sixteen, and though so very young, he immediately assumed the personal direction of the government. He was by no means destitute of talents, but his cruel and presumptuous character rendered him incapable of learning to perform the duties of his situation with justice. He turned his arms against the Saracens though the caliph Abdul-Malik offered to make additional concessions in order to induce the emperor to renew the treaty of peace which had been concluded with his father. Justinian sent a powerful army into Armenia under Leontius. All the provinces which had shown any disposition to favour the Saracens were laid waste, and the army carried off an immense booty, and drove away a great part of the inhabitants as slaves. The caliph being engaged in a struggle for the Caliphate with powerful rivals, and disturbed by rebels even in his own Syrian dominions, arrested the progress of the Roman arms by purchasing peace on terms far more favourable to the empire than those of the treaty between Constantine and Moawyah.

Justinian, at the commencement of his reign, made a successful expedition into the country occupied by the Slavonians in Macedonia, who were now closely allied with the Bulgarian principality beyond Mount Hæmus.

This people, emboldened by their increased force, had pushed their plundering excursions as far as the Propontis. The imperial army was completely successful, and both the Slavonians and their Bulgarian allies were defeated. In order to repeople the fertile shores of the Hellespont about Abydos, Justinian transplanted a number of the Slavonian families into the province of Opsicum. This colony was so numerous and powerful that it furnished a considerable contingent to the imperial armies.

The peace with the Saracens was not of long duration. Justinian refused to receive the first gold pieces coined by Abdul-Malik, which bore the legend, "God is the Lord." The tribute had previously been paid in money from the municipal mints of Syria; and Justinian imagined that the new Arabian coinage was an attack on the Holy Trinity. He led his army in person against the Saracens, and a battle took place near Sebastopolis, on the coast of Cilicia, in which he was entirely defeated, in consequence of the treason of the leader of his Slavonian troops. Justinian fled from the field of battle, and on his way to the capital he revenged himself on the Slavonians who had remained faithful to his standard for the desertion of their countrymen. The Slavonians in his service were put to death, and he even ordered the wives and children of those who had joined the Saracens to be murdered. The deserters were established by the Saracens on the coast of Syria, and in the island of Cyprus; and under the government of the caliph they were more prosperous than under that of the Roman emperor.

PART OF A SARACEN STANDARD

It was during this war that the Saracens inflicted the first great badge of civil degradation on the Christian population of their dominions. Abdul-Malik established the haratch, or Christian capitation tax, in order to raise money to carry on the war with Justinian. This unfortunate mode of taxing the Christian subjects of the caliph, in a different manner from the Mohammedans, completely separated the two classes, and reduced the Christians to the rank of serfs of the state, whose most prominent political relation with the Mussulman community was that of furnishing money to the government. The decline of the Christian population throughout the dominions of the caliphs was the consequence of this ill-judged measure, which has probably tended more to the depopulation of the East than all the tyranny and military violence of the Mohammedan armies.

[692-695 A.D.]

The restless spirit of Justinian naturally plunged into the ecclesiastical controversies which divided the church. He assembled a general council called usually *in Trullo*, from the hall of its meeting having been covered with a dome. The proceedings of this council, as might have been expected from those of an assembly controlled by such a spirit as that of the emperor, tended only to increase the growing differences between the Greek and Latin parties in the church. Of 102 canons sanctioned by this council, the pope finally rejected six, as adverse to the usages of the Latins. And thus an additional cause of separation was permanently created between the Greeks and Latins, and the measures of the church, as well as the political arrangements of the times, and the social feelings of the people, all tended to render union impossible.

A taste for building is a common fancy of sovereigns who possess the absolute disposal of large funds without any feeling of their duty as trustees for the benefit of the people whom they govern. Even in the midst of the greatest public distress, the treasury of nations, on the very verge of ruin and bankruptcy, must contain large sums of money drawn from the annual taxation. This treasure, when placed at the irresponsible disposal of princes who affect magnificence, is frequently employed in useless and ornamental building; and this fashion has been so general with despots, that the princes who have been most distinguished for their love of building, have not unfrequently been the worst and most oppressive sovereigns. It is always a delicate and difficult task for a sovereign to estimate the amount which a nation can wisely afford to expend on ornamental architecture; and from his position he is seldom qualified to judge correctly on what buildings ornament ought to be employed in order to make art accord with the taste and feelings of the people. Public opinion affords the only criterion for the formation of a sound judgment on this department of public administration; for, when princes possessing a taste for building are not compelled to consult the wants and wishes of their subjects in the construction of national edifices they are apt, by their wild projects and lavish expenditure, to create evils far greater than any which could result from an exhibition of bad taste alone.

In an evil hour the love of building took possession of Justinian's mind. His lavish expenditure soon obliged him to make his financial administration more rigorous, and general discontent quickly pervaded the capital. The religious and superstitious feelings of the population were severely wounded by the emperor's eagerness to destroy a church of the Virgin, in order to embellish the vicinity of his palace with a splendid fountain. Justinian's own scruples required to be soothed by a religious ceremony, but the patriarch for some time refused to officiate, alleging that the church had no prayers to desecrate holy buildings. The emperor, however, was the head of the church and the master of the bishops, whom he could remove from office, so that the patriarch did not long dare to refuse obedience to his orders. It is said, however, that the patriarch showed very clearly his dissatisfaction by repairing to the spot and authorising the destruction of the church by an ecclesiastical ceremony, to which he added these words, "to God, who suffers all things, be rendered glory, now and forever. Amen." The ceremony was sufficient to satisfy the conscience of the emperor, who perhaps neither heard nor heeded the words of the patriarch. The public discontent was loudly expressed, and Justinian soon perceived that the fury of the populace threatened a rebellion in Constantinople. To avert the danger, he took every measure which unscrupulous cruelty could suggest;

but, as generally happens in periods of general discontent and excitement, the storm burst in an unexpected quarter, and the hatred of Justinian left him suddenly without support. Leontius, one of the ablest generals of the empire, whose exploits have been already mentioned, had been thrown into prison, but was at this time ordered to assume the government of the province of Hellas. He considered the nomination as a mere pretext to remove him from the capital, in order to put him to death at a distance without any trial.

On the eve of his departure, Leontius placed himself at the head of a sedition; Justinian was seized, and his ministers were murdered by the populace with the most savage cruelty. Leontius was proclaimed emperor, but he spared the life of his dethroned predecessor for the sake of the benefits which he had received from Constantine Pogonatus. He ordered Justinian's nose to be cut off, and exiled him to Cherson. From this mutilation the dethroned emperor received the insulting nickname of Rhinotmetus, or "docknose," by which he is distinguished in Byzantine history.

### THE GOVERNMENT OF LEONTIUS (695-698 A.D.)

The government of Leontius was characterised by the unsteadiness which not unfrequently marks the administration of the ablest sovereigns who obtain their thrones by accidental circumstances rather than by systematic combinations. The most important event of his reign was the final loss of Africa, which led to his dethronement. The indefatigable caliph Abdul-Malik despatched a powerful expedition into Africa under Hassan; the province was soon conquered, and Carthage was captured after a feeble resistance. An expedition sent by Leontius to relieve the province arrived too late to save Carthage, but the commander-in-chief forced the entrance into the port, recovered possession of the city, and drove the Arabs from most of the fortified towns on the coast. The Arabs constantly received new reinforcements, which the Roman general demanded from Leontius in vain. At last the Arabs assembled a fleet, and the Romans, being defeated in a naval engagement, were compelled to abandon Carthage, which the Arabs utterly destroyed,—having too often experienced the superiority of the Romans, both in naval affairs and in the art of war, to venture on retaining populous and fortified cities on the sea coast. This curious fact affords strong proof of the great superiority of the Roman commerce and naval resources, and equally powerful evidence of the shameful disorder in the civil and military administration of the empire, which rendered these advantages useless, and allowed the imperial fleets to be defeated by the naval forces collected by the Arabs from among their Egyptian and Syrian subjects. At the same time it is evident that the naval victories of the Arabs could never have been gained unless a powerful party of the Christians had been induced, by their feelings of hostility to the Roman Empire, to afford them a willing support; for there were as yet neither shipbuilders nor sailors among the Mussulmans.

The Roman expedition, on its retreat from Carthage, stopped in the Island of Crete, where a sedition broke out among the troops, in which their general was killed. Apsimar, the commander of the Cibyraiot troops, was declared emperor by the name of Tiberius. The fleet proceeded directly to Constantinople, which offered no resistance. Leontius was taken prisoner, his nose cut off, and his person confined in a monastery. Tiberius Apsimar

[698-711 A.D.]

governed the empire with prudence, and his brother Heraclius commanded the Roman armies with success. The imperial troops penetrated into Syria; a victory was gained over the Arabs at Samosata, but the ravages committed by the Romans in this invasion surpassed the greatest cruelties ever inflicted by the Arabs; for two hundred thousand Saracens are said to have perished during the campaign. Armenia was alternately invaded and laid waste by the Romans and the Saracens, as the various turns of war favoured the hostile parties, and as the changing interests of the Armenian population induced them to aid the emperor or the caliph. But while Tiberius was occupied in the duties of government, and living without any fear of a domestic enemy, he was suddenly surprised in his capital by Justinian, who appeared before Constantinople at the head of a Bulgarian army (705).

## JUSTINIAN RECOVERS THE THRONE

Ten years of exile had been spent by the banished emperor in vain attempts to obtain power. His violent proceedings made him everywhere detested, but he possessed the daring enterprise and the ferocious cruelty necessary for a chief of banditti, joined to a singular confidence in the value of his hereditary claim to the imperial throne; so that no undertaking appeared to him hopeless. After quarrelling with the inhabitants of Cherson, and with his brother-in-law, the king of the Khazars, he succeeded, by a desperate exertion of courage, in reaching the country of the Bulgarians. Terbelis, their sovereign, agreed to assist him in recovering his throne, and they marched immediately with a Bulgarian army to the walls of Constantinople. Three days after their arrival, they succeeded in entering the capital during the night. Ten years of adversity had increased the natural ferocity of Justinian's disposition; and a desire of vengeance seems henceforward to have been the chief motive of his actions.

The population of Constantinople had now sunk to the same degree of barbarism as the nations surrounding them, and in cruelty they were worthy subjects of their emperor. Justinian gratified them by celebrating his restoration with splendid chariot races in the circus. He sat on an elevated throne, with his feet resting on the necks of the dethroned emperors, Leontius and Tiberius, who were stretched on the platform below, while the Greek populace around shouted the words of the psalmist, "Thou shalt tread down the asp and the basilisk, thou shalt trample on the lion and the dragon." The dethroned emperors and Heraclius, who had so well sustained the glory of the Roman arms against the Saracens, were afterwards hung from the battlements of Constantinople. Justinian's whole soul was occupied with plans of vengeance. Though the conquest of Tyana laid open Asia Minor to the incursions of the Saracens, instead of opposing them, he directed his disposable forces to punish the cities of Ravenna and Cherson, because they had incurred his personal hatred. Both the proscribed cities had rejoiced at his dethronement; they were both taken and treated with savage cruelty. The Greek city of Cherson, though the seat of a flourishing commerce, and inhabited by a numerous population, was condemned to utter destruction. Justinian ordered all the buildings to be razed with the ground, and every soul within its walls to be put to death; but the troops sent to execute these barbarous orders revolted, and proclaimed an Armenian, called Bardanes, emperor, under the name of Philippicus. Seizing the fleet, they sailed directly to Constantinople.

Justinian was encamped with an army in Asia Minor when Philippicus arrived, and took possession of the capital without encountering any resistance. He was immediately deserted by his whole army, for the troops were as little pleased with his conduct since his restoration, as was every other class of his subjects; but his ferocity and courage never failed him, and his rage was unbounded when he found himself abandoned by every one. He was seized and executed, without having it in his power to offer the slightest resistance. His son Tiberius, though only six years of age, was torn from the altar of a church, to which he had been conducted for safety, and cruelly massacred; and thus the race of Heraclius was extinguished, after the family had governed the Roman Empire for exactly a century (610 to 711 A.D.).

## ANARCHY

During the interval of six years which elapsed from the death of Justinian II to the accession of Leo the Isaurian, the imperial throne was occupied by three sovereigns. Their history is only remarkable as proving the inherent strength of the Roman body politic, which could survive such continual revolutions, even in the state of weakness to which it was reduced. Philippicus was a luxurious and extravagant prince, who thought only of enjoying the situation which he had accidentally obtained. He was soon dethroned by a band of conspirators, who carried him off from the palace while in a fit of drunkenness, and after putting out his eyes, left him helpless in the middle of the hippodrome. The reign of Philippicus would hardly deserve notice, had he not increased the confusion into which the empire had fallen, and exposed the total want of character and conscience among the Greek clergy, by re-establishing the monothelite doctrines in a general council of the Eastern bishops.

As the conspirators who had dethroned Philippicus had not formed any plan for choosing his successor, the first secretary of state was elected emperor by a public assembly held in the great church of St. Sophia, under the name of Anastasius II. He immediately re-established the orthodox faith, and his character is consequently the subject of eulogy with the historians of his reign. The Saracens, whose power was continually increasing, were at this time preparing a great expedition at Alexandria, in order to attack Constantinople. Anastasius sent a fleet with the troops of the theme Opsicium, to destroy the magazines of timber collected on the coast of Phœnicia for the purpose of assisting the preparations at Alexandria. The Roman armament was commanded by a deacon of St. Sophia, who also held the office of grand treasurer of the empire. The nomination of a member of the clergy to command the army gave great dissatisfaction to the troops, who were not yet so deeply tinctured with ecclesiastical ideas and manners, as the aristocracy of the empire. A sedition took place while the army lay at Rhodes; Joannes the Deacon was slain, and the expedition quitted the port in order to return to the capital. The soldiers on their way landed at Adramyttium, and finding there a collector of the revenues of a popular character, they declared him emperor, under the name of Theodosius III.

The new emperor was compelled unwillingly to follow the army. For six months, Constantinople was closely besieged, and the emperor Anastasius, who had retired to Nicæa, was defeated in a general engagement. The capital was at last taken by the rebels, who were so deeply sensible of their

[711-717 A.D.]

real interests, that they maintained strict discipline, and Anastasius, whose weakness gave little confidence to his followers, consented to resign the empire to Theodosius, and to retire into a monastery, that he might secure an amnesty to all his friends. Theodosius was distinguished by many good qualities, but on the throne he proved a perfect cipher, and his reign is only remarkable as affording a pretext for the assumption of the imperial dignity by Leo III, called the Isaurian. This able and enterprising officer, perceiving that the critical times rendered the empire the prize of any man who had talents to seize, and power to defend it, placed himself at the head of the troops in Asia Minor, assumed the title of emperor, and soon compelled Theodosius to quit the throne and become a priest.

During the period which elapsed between the death of Heraclius and the accession of Leo, the few remains of Roman principles of administration which had lingered in the imperial court, were gradually extinguished. The long-cherished hope of restoring the ancient power and glory of the Roman Empire expired, and even the aristocracy, which always clings the last to antiquated forms and ideas, no longer dwelt with confidence on the memory of former days. The conviction that the empire had undergone a great moral and political change, which severed the future irrevocably from the past, though it was probably not fully understood, was at least felt and acted on both by the people and the government. The sad fact that the splendid light of civilisation which had illuminated the ancient world had now become as obscure at Constantinople as at Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage was too evident to be longer doubted; the very twilight of antiquity had faded into darkness. It is rather, however, the province of the antiquary than of the historian to collect all the traces of this truth scattered over the records of the seventh century.

The disorganisation of the Roman government at this period, and the want of any influence over the court by the Greek nation, are visible in the choice of the persons who occupied the imperial throne after the extinction of the family of Heraclius. They were selected by accident, and several were of foreign origin, who did not even look upon themselves as either Greeks or Romans. Philippicus was an Armenian, and Leo III, whose reign opens a new era in Eastern history, was an Isaurian. On the throne he proved that he was destitute of any attachment to Roman political institutions, and any respect for the Greek ecclesiastical establishment. It was by the force of his talents, and by his able direction of the state and of the army, that he succeeded in securing his family on the Byzantine throne; for he unquestionably placed himself in direct hostility to the feelings and opinions of his Greek and Roman subjects, and transmitted to his successors a contest between the imperial power and the Greek nation concerning picture worship, in which the very existence of Greek nationality, civilisation, and religion, became at last compromised. From the commencement of the iconoclastic contest, the history of the Greeks assumes a new aspect. Their civilisation, and their connection with the Byzantine Empire, become linked with the policy and fortunes of the Eastern church, and ecclesiastical affairs obtain a supremacy over all social and political considerations in their minds.

The geographical extent of the empire at the time of its transition from the Roman to the Byzantine Empire affords evidence of the influence which the territorial changes produced by the Saracen conquests exercised in conferring political importance on the Greek race. The frontier towards the Saracens of Syria commenced at Mopsuestia in Cilicia, the last fortress

of the Arab power. It ran along the chains of mounts Amanus and Taurus to the mountainous district to the north of Edessa and Nisibis, called, after the time of Justinian, the Fourth Armenia, of which Martyropolis was the capital. It then followed nearly the ancient limits of the empire until it reached the Black Sea, a short distance to the east of Trebizond. On the northern shores of the Euxine, Cherson was now the only city that acknowledged the supremacy of the empire, retaining at the same time all its wealth and commerce, with the municipal privileges of a free city. In Europe, Mount Hæmus formed the barrier against the Bulgarians, while the mountainous ranges which bound Macedonia to the northwest, and encircle the territory of Dyrrhachium, were regarded as the limits of the free Slavonian states. It is true that large bodies of Slavonians had penetrated to the south of this line, and lived in Greece and Peloponnesus, but not in the same independent condition with reference to the imperial administration as their northern brethren of the Servian family.

Istria, Venice, and the cities on the Dalmatian coast, still acknowledged the supremacy of the empire, though their distant position, their commercial connections, and their religious feelings, were all tending towards a final separation. In the centre of Italy, the exarchate of Ravenna still held Rome in subjection, but the people of Italy were entirely alienated from the political administration, which was now regarded by them as purely Greek, and the Italians, with Rome before their eyes, could hardly admit the pretensions of the Greeks to be regarded as the legitimate representatives of the Roman Empire. The loss of northern and central Italy was consequently an event in constant danger of occurring; it would have required an able and energetic and just government to have repressed the national feelings of the Italians, and conciliated their allegiance. The condition of the population of the south of Italy and of Sicily was very different. There the majority of the inhabitants were Greeks in language and manners; but at this time the cities of Gæta (Caieta), Naples (Neapolis), Amalfi, and Sorrento (Surrentum), the district of Otranto, and the peninsula to the south of the ancient Sybaris, now called Calabria, were the only parts which remained under the Byzantine government. Sicily, though it had begun to suffer from the incursions of the Saracens, was still populous and wealthy. Sardinia, the last possession of the Greeks to the westward of Italy, was conquered by the Saracens about this time (711 A.D.).[c]

# CHAPTER VII

## LEO THE ISAURIAN TO JOANNES ZIMISCES

[717–969 A.D.]

WITH the accession of Leo the Isaurian to the throne of Constantinople a new era opens in the history of the Eastern Empire. The progress of society had been deliberately opposed by imperial legislation. The legislators of the empire were persuaded that each order and profession of its citizens should be fixed by hereditary succession, and an attempt had been made to divide the population into castes. But the political laws not only impoverished but depopulated the empire, and threatened the dissolution of the very elements of society. Under their operation the Western Empire became the prey of the smaller northern nations, and the Eastern Empire was on the verge of being overrun by the Saracen invaders.[a]

Leo III mounted the throne, and under his government the empire not only ceased to decline, but even began to regain much of its early vigour. Reformed modifications of the old Roman authority developed new energy in the empire. Great political reforms, and still greater changes in the condition of the people, mark the eighth century as an epoch of transition.

When Leo III was proclaimed emperor, it seemed as if no human power could save Constantinople from falling as Rome had fallen. The Saracens considered the sovereignty of every land in which any remains of Roman civilisation survived, as within their grasp. Leo, an Isaurian,[1] and an icono-

[1 Isauria is an obsolete name referring to a district in Asia Minor bounded by Cilicia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, and Pisidia. The region was cold and rugged and the Isaurians accordingly independent and fond of raids. In 75 B.C., the Roman proconsul, P. Servilius, brought them to terms and received the epithet Isauricus, but the Romans were eventually glad to grant them freedom in return for peace. Justinian claimed to have subdued them. Two emperors came from Isauria, Zeno (474–495) and the epoch-making Leo.

Hertzberg[b] says that Leo was called Isaurian "probably from the nativity of his parents," and thinks he was "born about 675 at Germanicia, on the borders of Cappadocia, Armenia, and Syria," whence he was taken to Mesembria in Thrace by his parents after the Arab invasion. K. Schenk,[c] however, says, "I employ the epithet consecrated by the error of centuries, although Leo was sprung from Germanicia, and therefore is a Syrian." Gelzer[d] accordingly calls Leo "the Syrian (Isaurian) emperor." He calls the accession of Leo "a moment of true world-historical meaning."]

clast, consequently a foreigner and a heretic, ascended the throne of Constantine, and arrested the victorious career of the Mohammedans. He then reorganised the whole administration so completely in accordance with the new exigencies of Eastern society, that the reformed empire outlived for many centuries every government contemporary with its establishment.

The Eastern Roman Empire, thus reformed, is called by modern historians the Byzantine Empire; and the term is well devised to mark the changes effected in the government, after the extinction of the last traces of the military monarchy of ancient Rome. The social condition of the inhabitants of the Eastern Empire had already undergone a considerable change during the century which elapsed from the accession of Heraclius to that of Leo.

This change created a new phase in the Roman Empire. The gradual progress of this change has led some writers to date the commencement of the Byzantine Empire as early as the reigns of Zeno and Anastasius, and others to descend so late as the times of Maurice and Heraclius.[1] But as the Byzantine Empire was only a continuation of the Roman government under a reformed system, it seems most correct to date its commencement from the period when the new social and political modifications produced a visible effect on the fate of the Eastern Empire. This period is marked by the accession of Leo the Isaurian.

The administrative system of Rome, as modified by Constantine, continued in operation, though subjected to frequent reforms, until Constantinople was stormed by the crusaders, and the Greek church enslaved by papal domination. The general council of Nicæa, and the dedication of the imperial city, with their concomitant legislative, administrative, and judicial institutions, engendered a succession of political measures, whose direct relations were uninterrupted until terminated by foreign conquest. The government of Great Britain has undergone greater changes during the last three centuries than that of the Eastern Empire during the nine centuries which elapsed from the foundation of Constantinople in 330, to its conquest in 1204.

Yet Leo III has strong claims to be regarded as the first of a new series of emperors. He was the founder of a dynasty, the saviour of Constantinople, and the reformer of the church and state. He was the first Christian sovereign who arrested the torrent of Mohammedan conquest; he improved the condition of his subjects; he attempted to purify their religion from the superstitious reminiscences of Hellenism, with which it was still debased, and to stop the development of a quasi-idolatry in the orthodox church. Nothing can prove more decidedly the right of his empire to assume a new name than the contrast presented by the condition of its inhabitants to that of the subjects of the preceding dynasty. Under the successors of Heraclius, the Roman Empire presents the spectacle of a declining society, and its thinly peopled provinces were exposed to the intrusion of foreign colonists and hostile invaders. But, under Leo, society offers an aspect of improve-

[1 Clinton *e* says, "The empire of Rome, properly so called, ends at 476 A.D.," which is the third year of Zeno. Numismatists, like Saulcy, *f* place the commencement of the Byzantine Empire in the reign of Anastasius I. Gibbon *g* tells us, "Tiberius by the Arabs, and Maurice by the Italians, are distinguished as the first of the Greek Cæsars, as the founders of a new dynasty and empire. The silent revolution was accomplished before the death of Heraclius." Bury, *h* on the other hand, vehemently denies the justice of using the word "Byzantine" at all, saying "no Byzantine Empire ever began to exist; the Roman Empire did not come to an end until 1453." He accordingly clings to the expression "Later Roman Empire." None the less, since Finlay *i* finds the word Byzantine a convenient term and places its proper beginning here, and since so many other historians old and new have given the word authority, it may well be allowed to stand.]

[717 A.D.]

ment and prosperity ; the old population revives from its lethargy, and soon increases, both in number and strength, to such a degree as to drive back all intruders on its territories. In the records of human civilisation, Leo the Isaurian must always occupy a high position, as a type of what the central power in a state can effect even in a declining empire.

Thus after the accession of Leo III, a new condition of society is apparent; and though many old political evils continued to exist, it becomes evident that a greater degree of personal liberty, as well as greater security for property, was henceforth guaranteed to the mass of the inhabitants of the empire. Indeed, no other government of which history has preserved the records, unless it be that of China, has secured equal advantages to its subjects for so long a period. The empires of the caliphs and of Charlemagne, though historians have celebrated their praises loudly, cannot, in their best days, compete with the administration organised by Leo on this point ; and both sank into ruin while the Byzantine Empire continued to flourish in full vigour. It must be confessed that eminent historians present a totally different picture of Byzantine history to their readers. Voltaire speaks of it as a worthless repertory of declamation and miracles, disgraceful to the human mind. Even the sagacious Gibbon,[g] after enumerating with just pride the extent of his labours, adds: "From these considerations, I should have abandoned without regret the Greek slaves and their servile historians, had I not reflected that the fate of the Byzantine monarchy is passively connected with the most splendid and important revolutions which have changed the state of the world."

The history of the Byzantine Empire divides itself into three periods, strongly marked by distinct characteristics.

The first period commences with the reign of Leo III in 716, and terminates with that of Michael III in 867. It comprises the whole history of the predominance of the iconoclasts in the established church, and of the reaction which reinstated the orthodox in power. It opens with the efforts by which Leo and the people of the empire saved the Roman law and the Christian religion from the conquering Saracens. It embraces a long and violent struggle between the government and the people, the emperors seeking to increase the central power by annihilating every local franchise, and even the right of private opinion, among their subjects. The contest concerning image worship, from the prevalence of ecclesiastical ideas, became the expression of this struggle. Its object was as much to consolidate the supremacy of the imperial authority, as to purify the practice of the church. The emperors wished to constitute themselves the fountains of ecclesiastical as completely as of civil legislation.

The long and bloody wars of this period, and the vehement character of the sovereigns who filled the throne, attract the attention of those who love to dwell on the romantic facts of history. Unfortunately, the biographical sketches and individual characters of the heroes of these ages lie concealed in the dullest chronicles. But the true historical feature of this memorable period is the aspect of a declining empire, saved by the moral vigour developed in society, and of the central authority struggling to restore national prosperity. Never was such a succession of able sovereigns seen following one another on any other throne. The stern iconoclast, Leo the Isaurian, opens the line as the second founder of the Eastern Empire. His son, the fiery Constantine, who was said to prefer the odour of the stable to the perfumes of his palaces, replanted the Christian standards on the banks of the Euphrates. Irene, the beautiful Athenian, presents a strange combination

of talent, heartlessness, and orthodoxy. The finance minister, Nicephorus, perishes on the field of battle like an old Roman. The Armenian Leo falls at the altar of his private chapel, murdered as he is singing psalms with his deep voice, before day-dawn. Michael the Amorian, who stammered Greek with his native Phrygian accent, became the founder of an imperial dynasty, destined to be extinguished by a Slavonian groom. The accomplished Theophilus lived in an age of romance, both in action and literature. His son, Michael, the last of the Amorian family, was the only contemptible prince of this period, and he was certainly the most despicable buffoon that ever occupied a throne.

A Byzantine Peasant

The second period commences with the reign of Basil I in 867, and terminates with the deposition of Michael VI in 1057. During two centuries the imperial sceptre was retained by members of the Basilian family, or held by those who shared their throne as guardians or husbands. At this time the Byzantine Empire attained its highest pitch of external power and internal prosperity. The Saracens were pursued into the plains of Syria. Antioch and Edessa were reunited to the empire. The Bulgarian monarchy was conquered, and the Danube became again the northern frontier. The Slavonians in Greece were almost exterminated. Byzantine commerce filled the whole Mediterranean, and legitimated the claim of the emperor of Constantinople to the title of "autocrat of the Mediterranean Sea." But the real glory of this period consists in the power of the law. Respect for the administration of justice pervaded society more generally than it had ever done at any preceding period of the history of the world — a fact which seems to have been completely overlooked by some of our greatest historians, though it is all-important in the history of human civilisation.

The third period extends from the accession of Isaac I (Comnenus) in 1057, to the conquest of the Byzantine Empire by the crusaders, in 1204. This is the true period of decline and fall of the Eastern Empire. It commenced by a rebellion of the great nobles of Asia, who effected an internal revolution in the Byzantine Empire by wrenching the administration out of the hands of well-trained officials, and destroying the responsibility created by a systematic procedure. A despotism supported by personal influence soon ruined the scientific fabric which had previously upheld the imperial power. The people were ground to the earth by a fiscal rapacity, over which the splendour of the house of Comnenus throws a thin veil. The wealth of the empire was dissipated, its prosperity destroyed, the administration of justice corrupted, and the central authority lost all control over the population, when a band of 20,000 adventurers, masked as crusaders, put an end to the Roman Empire of the East.

[716-717 A.D.]

## LEO III (LEO THE ISAURIAN), 717–741 A.D.

When Leo was raised to the throne, the empire was threatened with immediate ruin. Six emperors had been dethroned within the space of twenty-one years. Of these, four perished by the hand of the public executioner, one died in obscurity, after being deprived of sight, and the other was only allowed to end his days peacefully in a monastery because Leo felt the imperial sceptre firmly fixed in his own grasp. Every army assembled to encounter the Saracens had broken out into rebellion. The Bulgarians and Slavonians wasted Europe up to the walls of Constantinople; the Saracens ravaged the whole of Asia Minor to the shores of the Bosporus.

Amorium was the principal city of the theme Anatolicum. The caliph Suleiman had sent his brother, Moslemah, with a numerous army, to complete the conquest of the Roman Empire, which appeared to be an enterprise of no extraordinary difficulty, and Amorium was besieged by the Saracens. Leo, who commanded the Byzantine troops, required some time to concert the operations by which he hoped to raise the siege. To gain the necessary delay, he opened negotiations with the invaders, and, under the pretext of hastening the conclusion of the treaty, he visited the Saracen general engaged in the siege with an escort of only five hundred horse. The Saracens were invited to suspend their attacks until the decision of Moslemah, who was at the head of another division of the Mohammedan army, could be known.

In an interview which took place with the bishop and principal inhabitants of Amorium, relating to the proffered terms, Leo contrived to exhort them to continue their defence, and assured them of speedy succour. The besiegers, nevertheless, pressed forward their approaches. Leo, after his interview with the Amorians, proposed that the Saracen general should accompany him to the headquarters of Moslemah. The Saracen readily agreed to an arrangement which would enable him to deliver so important a hostage to the commander-in-chief. The wary Isaurian, who well knew that he would be closely watched, had made his plan of escape. On reaching a narrow defile, from which a cross-road led to the advanced posts of his own army, Leo suddenly drew his sabre and attacked the Saracens about his person; while his guards, who were prepared for the signal, easily opened a way through the two thousand hostile cavalry of the escort, and all reached the Byzantine camp in safety. Leo's subsequent military dispositions and diplomatic negotiations induced the enemy to raise the siege of Amorium, and the grateful inhabitants united with the army in saluting him emperor of the Romans. But in his arrangements with Moslemah, he is accused by his enemies of having agreed to conditions which facilitated the further progress of the Mohammedans, in order to secure his own march to Constantinople. On this march he was met by the son of Theodosius III, whom he defeated. Theodosius resigned his crown, and retired into a monastery;[1] while Leo made his triumphal entry into the capital by the Golden Gate, and was crowned by the patriarch in the church of Sophia on the 25th of March, 717.

The position of Leo continued to be one of extreme difficulty. The caliph Suleiman, who had seen one private adventurer succeed the other in quick succession on the imperial throne, deemed the moment favourable

[1] Theodosius ended his life at Ephesus, where he was buried in the church of St. Philip. He ordered that his tombstone should bear no inscription but the word ΥΓΕΙΑ (Health).

for the final conquest of the Christians; and, reinforcing his brother's army, he ordered him to lay siege to Constantinople. The Saracen Empire had now reached its greatest extent. From the banks of the Sihun and the Indus to the shores of the Atlantic in Mauretania and Spain, the orders of Suleiman were implicitly obeyed. The recent conquests of Spain in the West, and of Fergana, Kashgar, and Sind in the East, had animated the confidence of the Mohammedans to such a degree that no enterprise appeared difficult. The army Moslemah led against Constantinople was the best-appointed that had ever attacked the Christians; it consisted of eighty thousand warriors. The caliph announced his intention of taking the field in person with additional forces, should the capital of the Christians offer a protracted resistance to the arms of Islam. The whole expedition is said to have employed 180,000 men; and the number does not appear to be greatly exaggerated, if it be supposed to include the sailors of the fleet and the reinforcements which reached the camp before Constantinople.

### THE SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE (717–718 A.D.)

Moslemah, after capturing Pergamus, marched to Abydos, where he was joined by the Saracen fleet. He then transported his army across the Hellespont, and, marching along the shore of the Propontis, invested Leo in his capital both by land and sea.[1] The strong walls of Constantinople, the engines of defence with which Roman and Greek art had covered the ramparts, and the skill of the Byzantine engineers, rendered every attempt to carry the place by assault hopeless, so that the Saracens were compelled to trust to the effect of a strict blockade for gaining possession of the city. They surrounded their camp with a deep ditch, and strengthened it with a strong dike. Moslemah then sent out large detachments to collect forage and destroy the provisions which might otherwise find their way into the besieged city. The presence of an active enemy and a populous city required constant vigilance on the part of a great portion of his land forces.

The Saracen fleet consisted of eighteen hundred vessels of war and transports. In order to form the blockade, it was divided into two squadrons; one was stationed on the Asiatic coast, in the ports of Eutropius and Anthimus, to prevent supplies arriving from the Archipelago; the other occupied the base in the European shore of the Bosporus above the point of Galata, in order to cut off all communication with the Black Sea and the cities of Cherson and Trebizond. The first naval engagement took place as the fleet was taking up its position within the Bosporus. The current, rendered impetuous by a change of wind, threw the heavy ships and transports into confusion. The besieged directed some fire-ships against the crowded vessels, and succeeded in burning several, and driving others on shore under the walls of Constantinople. The Saracen admiral, Suleiman, confident in the number of his remaining ships of war, resolved to avenge his partial defeat by a complete victory. He placed one hundred chosen Arabs, in complete armour, in each of his best vessels, and, advancing to the walls of Constantinople, made a vigorous attempt to enter the place by assault, as it was entered long after by Doge Dandolo. Leo was well prepared to repulse the attack, and, under his experienced guidance, the Arabs were completely defeated. A number of the Saracen ships were burned by the Greek fire which the besieged

[1] This was in August, 717, according to western authorities, though the Arabs set it in 716.]

[717-718 A.D.]

launched from their walls. After this defeat, Suleiman withdrew the European squadron of his fleet into the Sosthenian bay.

The besiegers encamped before Constantinople on the 15th of August, 717. The caliph Suleiman[1] died before he was able to send any reinforcements to his brother. The winter proved unusually severe. The country all round Constantinople remained covered with deep snow for many weeks. The greater part of the horses and camels in the camp of Moslemah perished; numbers of the best soldiers, accustomed to the mild winters of Syria, died from having neglected to take the requisite precautions against a northern climate. The difficulty of procuring food ruined the discipline of the troops. These misfortunes were increased by the untimely death of the admiral, Suleiman. In the meantime, Leo and the inhabitants of Constantinople, having made the necessary preparations for a long siege, passed the winter in security. A fleet, fitted out at Alexandria, brought supplies to Moslemah in the spring. Four hundred transports, escorted by men-of-war, sailed past Constantinople, and, entering the Bosporus, took up their station at Kalos Agros. Another fleet, almost equally numerous, arrived soon after from Africa, and anchored in the bays on the Bithynian coast. These positions rendered the current a protection against the fire-ships of the garrison of Constantinople. The crews of the new transports were in great part composed of Christians, and the weak condition of Moslemah's army filled them with fear. Many conspired to desert. Seizing the boats of their respective vessels during the night, numbers escaped to Constantinople, where they informed the emperor of the exact disposition of the whole Saracen force. Leo lost no time in taking advantage of the enemy's embarrassments. Fire-ships were sent with a favourable wind among the transports, while ships of war, furnished with engines for throwing Greek fire, increased the confusion. This bold attack was successful, and a part of the naval force of the Saracens was destroyed. Some ships fell a prey to the flames, some were driven on shore, and some were captured by the Byzantine squadron.

The blockade was now at an end, for Moslemah's troops were dying from want, while the besieged were living in plenty; but the Saracen obstinately persisted in maintaining possession of his camp in Europe. It was not until his foraging parties were repeatedly cut off, and all the beasts of burden were consumed as food, that he consented to allow the standard of the prophet to retreat before the Christians. The remains of his army were embarked in the relics of the fleet, and on the 15th of August, 718, Moslemah raised the siege, after ruining one of the finest armies the Saracens ever assembled, by obstinately persisting in a hopeless undertaking. The troops were landed at Proconnesus, and marched back to Damascus, through Asia Minor; but the fleet encountered a violent storm in passing through the Archipelago. The dispersed ships were pursued by the Greeks of the islands, and so many were lost or captured that only five of the Syrian squadron returned home.

Few military details concerning Leo's defence of Constantinople have been preserved, but there can be no doubt that it was one of the most brilliant exploits of a warlike age.

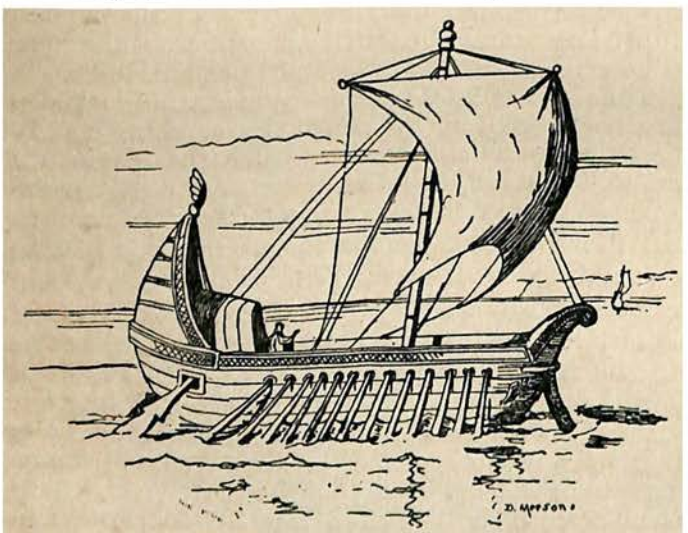
The vanity of Gallic writers has magnified the success of Charles Martel over a plundering expedition of the Spanish Arabs into a marvellous victory, and attributed the deliverance of Europe from the Saracen yoke to the valour of the Franks. A veil has been thrown over the talents and courage of Leo, a soldier of fortune, just seated on the imperial throne, who defeated the

[1 On the 8th of October, according to Theophanes.]

long-planned schemes of conquest of the caliphs Welid and Suleiman. It is unfortunate that we have no Isaurian literature.[n]

The world-historical importance of this event cannot be too highly esteemed. The Arabian onslaught had reached its climax. Byzantium, and its emperor who had thrown it off, had rescued Christianity and Western civilisation. Still to-day in the Acathistus-hymn the orthodox church thanks the three great heroes Heraclius, Constantine IV, and Leo III for the rescues from the Avara, the Persian, and the Arab dangers.[d]

The catastrophe of Moslemah's army, and the state of the caliphate during the reigns of Omar II and Yazid II, relieved the empire from all immediate danger, and Leo was enabled to pursue his schemes for reorganising the army and defending his dominions against future invasions. The war was languidly carried on for some years, and the Saracens were gradually expelled from most of their conquests beyond Mount Taurus. In the year 726, Leo was embarrassed by seditions and rebellions, caused by his decrees against image-worship. Hisham seized the opportunity, and sent two powerful armies to invade the empire. Cæsarea was taken by Moslemah; while another army, under Moawyah, pushing forward, laid siege to Nicæa. Leo was well pleased to see the Saracens consume their resources in attacking a distant fortress; but though they were repulsed before Nicæa, they retreated without serious loss, carrying off immense plunder. The plundering excursions of the Arabs were frequently renewed by land and sea. In one of these expeditions, the celebrated Sid-al-Battal carried off an individual who was set up by the Saracens as a pretender to the Byzantine throne, under the pretext that he was Tiberius, the son of Justinian II. Two sons of the caliph appeared more than once at the head of the invading armies. In the year 739 the Saracen forces poured into Asia Minor in immense numbers, with all their early energy. Leo, who had taken the command of the Byzantine army, accompanied by his son Constantine, marched to meet Sid-al-Battal, whose great fame rendered him the most dangerous enemy. A battle took place at Acroinon, in the Anatolic theme, in which the Saracens were totally defeated. The valiant Sid, the most renowned champion of Islamism, perished on the field; but the fame of his exploits has filled many volumes of Moslem romance, and furnished some of the tales that have adorned the memory of the Cid of Spain, three hundred years after the victory of Leo. The Western Christians have robbed the Byzantine Empire of its glory in every way. After this defeat the Saracen power ceased to be formidable to the empire, until the energy of the caliphate was revived by the vigorous administration of the Abbassides, who succeeded the Omayyads in 750.



AN EIGHTH CENTURY GALLEY

[726–729 A.D.]

Leo's victories over the Mohammedans were an indispensable step to the establishment of his personal authority. But the measures of administrative wisdom which rendered his reign a new era in Roman history, are its most important feature in the annals of the human race.

### REVOLT AGAINST LEO

The whole policy of Leo's reign has been estimated by his ecclesiastical reforms. These have been severely judged by all historians, and they appear to have encountered a violent opposition from a large portion of his subjects. The general dissatisfaction has preserved sufficient authentic information to allow of a candid examination of the merits and errors of his policy.

Leo commenced his ecclesiastical reforms in the year 726, by an edict ordering all pictures in churches to be placed so high as to prevent the people from kissing them,[1] and prohibiting prostration before these symbols, or any act of public worship being addressed to them. Against this moderate edict of the emperor, the patriarch Germanus and the pope Gregory II made strong representations. The despotic principles of Leo's administration, and the severe measures of centralisation which he enforced as the means of reorganising the public service, created many additional enemies to his government, as is hereafter more fully shown.

The rebellion of the inhabitants of Greece, which occurred in the year 727, seems to have originated in a dissatisfaction with the fiscal and administrative reforms of Leo, to which local circumstances, unnoticed by historians, gave peculiar violence, and which the edict against image-worship fanned into a flame. The unanimity of all classes, and the violence of the popular zeal in favour of their local privileges and superstitions, suggested the hope of dethroning Leo, and placing a Greek on the throne of Constantinople. A naval expedition, composed of the imperial fleet in the Cyclades, and attended by an army from the continent, was fitted out to attack the capital. Agallianus, who commanded the imperial forces stationed to watch the Slavonians settled in Greece, was placed at the head of the army destined to assail the conqueror of the Saracens. The name of the new emperor was Cosmas. In the month of April the Greek fleet appeared before Constantinople. It soon appeared that the Greeks, confiding in the goodness of their cause, had greatly overrated their own valour and strength, or strangely overlooked the resources of the iconoclasts. Leo met the fleet as it approached his capital, and completely defeated it. Agallianus, with the spirit of a hero, when he saw the utter ruin of the enterprise, plunged fully armed into the sea rather than surrender. Cosmas was taken prisoner, with another leader, and immediately beheaded. Leo, however, treated the mass of the prisoners with mildness.

The opposition Leo encountered only confirmed him in his persuasion that it was indispensably necessary to increase the power of the central government in the provinces. As he was sincerely attached to the opinions of the iconoclasts, he was led to connect his ecclesiastical reforms with his political measures, and to pursue both with additional zeal. In order to secure the active support of all the officers of the administration, and exclude all image-worshippers from power, he convoked an assembly, called a silentium,

[1 According to Hefele *m* this commonly accepted statement is not true, since Leo's first order was the total abolition of images.]

consisting of the senators and the highest functionaries in the church and state. In this solemn manner it was decreed that images were to be removed from all the churches throughout the empire.

Gregory II sent Leo strong representations against his first edicts on the subject of image-worship, and after the silentium he repeated these representations, and entered on a more decided course of opposition to the emperor's ecclesiastical reforms, being then convinced that there was no hope of Leo abandoning his heretical opinions. It seems that Italy, like the rest of the empire, had escaped in some degree from the oppressive burden of imperial taxation during the anarchy that preceded Leo's election. But the defeat of the Saracens before Constantinople had been followed by the re-establishment of the fiscal system. To overcome the opposition now made to the financial and ecclesiastical reforms, the exarch Paul was ordered to march to Rome and support Marinus, the duke, who found himself unable to contend against the papal influence.

The whole of central Italy burst into rebellion at this demonstration against its civil and religious interests. The exarch was compelled to shut himself up in Ravenna; for the cities of Italy, instead of obeying the imperial officers, elected magistrates of their own, on whom they conferred, in some cases, the title of duke. Assemblies were held, and the project of electing an emperor of the West was adopted; but the unfortunate result of the rebellion of Greece damped the courage of the Italians; and though a rebel, named Tiberius Petasius, really assumed the purple in Tuscany, he was easily defeated and slain by Eutychius, who succeeded Paul as exarch of Ravenna. Liutprand, king of the Lombards, taking advantage of these dissensions, invaded the imperial territory, and gained possession of Ravenna; but Gregory, who saw the necessity of saving the country from the Lombards and from anarchy, wrote to Ursus the duke of Venice, one of his warm partisans, and persuaded him to join Eutychius. The Lombards were defeated by the Byzantine troops, Ravenna was recovered, and Eutychius entered Rome with a victorious army. Gregory died in 731. Though he excited the Italian cities to resist the imperial power, and approved of the measures they adopted for stopping the remittance of their taxes to Constantinople, he does not appear to have adopted any measures for declaring Rome independent.

From 733 A.D., the city of Rome enjoyed political independence under the guidance and protection of the popes; but the officers of the Byzantine emperors were allowed to reside in the city, justice was publicly administered by Byzantine judges, and the supremacy of the Eastern Empire was still recognised. So completely, however, had Gregory III thrown off his allegiance, that he entered into negotiations with Charles Martel, in order to induce that powerful prince to take an active part in the affairs of Italy. The pope was now a much more powerful personage than the exarch of Ravenna, for the cities of central Italy, which had assumed the control of their local government, entrusted the conduct of their external political relations to the care of Gregory, who thus held the balance of power between the Eastern emperor and the Lombard king. In the year 742, while Constantine V, the son of Leo, was engaged with a civil war, the Lombards were on the eve of conquering Ravenna, but Pope Zacharias threw the whole of the Latin influence into the Byzantine scale, and enabled the exarch to maintain his position until the year 751, when Aistulf, king of the Lombards, captured Ravenna. The exarch retired to Naples, and the authority of the Byzantine emperors in central Italy ended.[n]

[717–723 A.D.]

Leo III died in 741.[1] He was succeeded by his son Constantine V, called Copronymus, whom he had crowned emperor in the year 720, and married to Irene, the daughter of the khan of the Khazars, thirteen years later. Before proceeding with the later reigns, we must pause to consider that great and bloody controversy which brought Christianity into contempt as idolatrous before the Mohammedans, and split the church, or rather split the laity from the church. It was the laity which was non-idolatrous; it was the church that clung to the sanctity and active power of images and even of relics. The subject is considered at more length under the history of the papacy, but cannot be omitted here, since it had its rise in that enlightened and fearless Leo Isauricus, who dared to be consistent even to the point of barbarity.[a]

### THE ICONOCLASTS

Since the twelfth year of the Hegira (634 A.D.) the hand of Ishmael had lain heavily on the world, nevertheless the rod of the taskmaster had in certain respects been useful to the Byzantine Empire, especially in the interior. Senseless despotism, careless dissimulation, and utter incompetence could not assert themselves for long on the throne. This resulted in a succession of brave soldiers ascending the throne — Byzantine autocrats since the time of Islam had on an average really been stronger than their predecessors — and in the reigning families rapidly detaching themselves. When one or the other dynasty tended to the Merovingian type, it only lasted for a short time. Amongst the families which under Islam wore the crown of Byzantium, the one founded by Leo Isauricus (717–741) occupied a prominent position; after Justinian it was second in the order of Byzantine dynasties.

Leo Isauricus, a man of humble birth, who rose from the rank of a common soldier to that of a general, and his son Constantine V on whom party feeling bestowed the opprobrious nickname of Copronymus, were brave men, but they reduced the church and the people to servitude as their predecessors had done, and perhaps even more ruthlessly, as is proved by their iconoclastic proceedings. Certainly in the beginning of the agitation now in question, they were not wanting in a motive which appeared just, and perhaps was so for a time. In consequence of the terrible oppression exercised by the government authorities, and the spiritual stagnation which generally arises from this source, the Byzantine nation had grown accustomed to superficiality in religion and, as a consequence, to a worship of images which reached a point at which Christianity seemed about to sink back into Hellenism.

On this important matter, which was frequently a source of great danger in the course of the century, Pope Gregory I established an unalterable rule. Bishop Serenus of Massilia (Marseilles), having observed that many of his parishioners worshipped the images which had been brought into the cathedral, cast them out and destroyed them. Gregory I commended the zeal with which Serenus had forbidden divine honours to be paid to the work of human hands, but at the same time censured him for having destroyed the images. He also referred to the reason given by other Fathers before him, and by Paulinus of Nola in particular; he writes, "the churches are decorated with images so that those who do not know the alphabet may see represented on the wall that which they cannot read in the Scriptures."

[1 June, 741, is the date usually assigned to Leo's death, but Bury[a] thinks that Theophanes[j] made a miscalculation, and he reckons from a solar eclipse and an Easter date, that Leo's death actually occurred in 740.]

This is the rule of the Catholic church — the places of worship must be decorated and these decorations respected. Woe betide him who lays hands on them. But the image must not be mistaken for that which it represents, it must not be treated as a thing divine. But according to reliable proofs still extant, the Greeks of the eighth and ninth centuries did not confine themselves within these limits; they became iconodules, as the majority of them remain to this day.

The abuse just referred to aroused the calculating ambition of a very powerful and hostile neighbour, according to the chronicler Theophanes. The caliph Yazid II, son of Abdul-Malik (720–724) successor to Omar II, issued a decree that all images should be forcibly removed from the Christian churches of his empire. This occurred in 723, three years before Leo Isauricus first prohibited the use of them. Up to that time the Moslem ruler had not interfered in the worship of his Christian subjects, who had enjoyed without molestation the same privileges as the Jews. The conduct of Yazid, on the contrary, gave rise to the idea that henceforth the caliphs would treat iconolatry as idolatry, and that those who adhered to the practice would fall under his displeasure, whether within or beyond the dominions of the caliphate. The above command therefore contained a hidden declaration of war against the Byzantine Empire.

CAPTAIN OF MERCENARY TROOPS, BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Such was the state of affairs when Leo Isauricus determined to take the lead and to wrest from the hereditary enemy of the Byzantine crown the weapons which he wished to use against it. In 726 he issued his first decree against images; it was moderate in tone, prostration before them being alone prohibited. A few bishops, partisans of Leo, began to remove the images from their churches. When this became known the people rebelled, but Leo subdued them by force.

After this, under Leo and under his son Constantine Copronymus (741–775), blow after blow was dealt. In 729 Leo summoned a conclave and invited the patriarch Germanus, a man who had almost reached the extreme limit of human age, to attend. A law was submitted ordering that the images should be removed from all churches and the painted walls whitewashed. When required to ratify it, the patriarch declared he would rather resign his office. He was taken at his word, exiled to a neighbouring state, and the vacant see was conferred on the priest Anastasius, a willing tool. All bishops of the realm were obliged to submit to the new law; the few who resisted were deposed.

Presently no sacred images were to be seen in the churches or in any other places. Over the iron gates of the imperial palace was a beautiful image of Christ, reputed to perform miracles, which was specially revered. The emperor ordered its removal. Blood was shed in the execution of this order. When a soldier at Leo's command mounted on the castle gate, and was about to deal the first blow at the image,[1] a crowd of furious women

[1] According to other accounts, he actually smote the statue in the face three times.]

[729-787 A.D.]

flung themselves upon him, and pulled down the ladder on which he was standing. The soldier fell to the ground and was immediately murdered by the mob. Thereupon the rioters rushed to the archbishop's residence, bent on destroying it, and on stoning the patriarch Anastasius; but the latter fled to the imperial palace. Meanwhile Leo had taken the necessary precautions: the body-guard rushed out and attacked the insurgents; those who resisted were killed or taken prisoners. Leo had gained the victory, and until his death in 741, no one dared to disturb the public peace.

### ICONOCLASM AFTER LEO

CHIEF OF BARBARIAN MERCENARIES, BYZANTINE EMPIRE

After Leo's death, conspiracies broke out against Constantine, his successor. These he defeated though with difficulty, and his discovery that a party in the church, the Byzantine monks, were defending the ancient custom with invincible obstinacy and thus supporting his adversaries, changed his struggle against iconolatry into ceaseless strife with the monasteries and all other typical forms of Christianity, and with the church itself and its mysteries. Events such as occurred at the time of the Reformation and in the eighteenth century now took place. The magistrates received orders to suppress all monasteries, many were demolished, others were converted into stables for the cavalry and camps for the infantry; the few that remained were not allowed to receive novices. The expelled monks had to lay aside their distinctive garb and dress like other people; the emperor compelled some to marry, nor did he spare them the weapon of ridicule. On one occasion he caused a number of monks, each leading a nun by the hand, to march up and down the hippodrome, where they were met by the jeers of the multitude.

Under the influence of such proceedings a peculiar spirit developed in the court, which was composed not only of soldiers and officials but also of the wealthy and pleasure-loving classes, a spirit which we can only compare to the freemasonry of a later day, or to the Bavarian *illuminati* of the eighteenth century.

The throne was everything, the church apparently nothing. For the second time the popedom of the Cæsars had reached a climax, not, as in the days of Justinian, under the form of piety, but under that of enlightenment. The Greek bishops patiently bore their yoke, there were no more monks, the glory of the empire dazzled the world, for Constantine was a fortunate ruler and a soldier crowned with glory, having overcome the Saracens and the Bulgarians, the enemies of the empire, in many battles. During his long reign there arose a race who were acquainted with cloisters and monks only by hearsay, and had experience of nothing but freemasonry and *illuminati*.

Nevertheless, after having asserted its authority for half a century, the iconoclastic party succumbed and finally disappeared without leaving a trace.

Two causes were mainly instrumental in bringing about this remarkable conclusion. First, the influence of the head of Christendom. In 726 and 729, when Leo proceeded to take steps against the icons, he had been vigorously opposed by Pope Gregory II (715–731). Gregory's successors continued the opposition and, when the house of Isauricus obstinately refused justice, a breach ensued with Byzantium. The discovery that in spite of all display of violence the Byzantine court must end by yielding, as soon as the Eastern church or even part of it sided in earnest with the see of St. Peter, first made in the dogmatic disputes of the fourth and fifth centuries, once more stood revealed.

Now for the second cause. Amongst the Byzantines there arose a great man, capable of gathering all elements favourable to the cause of ecclesiastical liberty, hitherto dispersed over the whole of the Eastern Empire, into one centre, and thus bringing them into practical touch with Rome. This was Theodore, abbot of the monastery of Studion, in Constantinople. With the exception of a brief victory, embittered by that unworthy woman, the empress Irene, under whose dominion it took place (789–802), and in which the adherents of iconolatry, or rather the defenders of ecclesiastical independence, were unable to exert any political influence, the life of Theodore was spent in a perpetual struggle, in which he displayed incomparable stoicism and the highest ability. He died in 826.

The cause which he had espoused with all the strength of a great soul, triumphed after his death and through the seed which he had sown. In one respect its triumph was complete, in another, partial only. On the 19th of February, 842, the patriarch Methodius of Constantinople set the final seal on the right of images in places of worship, by the institution of the feast of Orthodoxy. With the icons, unfortunately, the deplorable abuse already mentioned returned. Meanwhile it must be noted that in the course of the contest the Frankish church had repeatedly and energetically upheld the principles laid down by Pope Gregory I with regard to church discipline.

Opposition to the power which the emperor exercised on the subject of images, was only part of the plan which Theodore Studita pursued; the church and the people were also to be protected from the tyranny of the throne. The empress Irene, no doubt at the instigation of the party of Theodore, without whose support she would never have maintained her power, remitted some of the most oppressive taxes; and the emperor Nicephorus, by whom Irene was overthrown in 802, and who, although out of fear of Irene's legislation he tolerated the images, evidently trod from the first in the steps of Leo Isauricus and his son Constantine Copronymus, forthwith restored the full weight of the old taxation.[1]

## THE REIGN OF CONSTANTINE V (COPRONYMUS) (741–775 A.D.)

In a long reign of thirty-four years, the son and successor of Leo, Constantine V, surnamed Copronymus, attacked with less temperate zeal the images or idols of the church. Their votaries have exhausted the bitterness of religious gall, in their portrait of this spotted panther, this antichrist, this flying dragon of the serpent's seed, who surpassed the vices of Elagabalus and Nero. His reign was a long butchery of whatever was most noble, or holy, or innocent in his empire. In person the emperor assisted at the execution of his victims, surveyed their agonies, listened to their groans, and indulged, without satiating, his appetite for blood; a plate of noses was

[741-777 A.D.]

accepted as a grateful offering, and his domestics were often scourged or mutilated by the royal hand. His surname was derived from his pollution of his baptismal font. The infant might be excused; but the manly pleasures of Copronymus degraded him below the level of a brute.

In his religion, the iconoclast was a heretic, a Jew, a Mohammedan, a pagan, and an atheist; and his belief of an invisible power could be discovered only in his magic rites, human victims, and nocturnal sacrifices to Venus and the demons of antiquity. His life was stained with the most opposite vices, and the ulcers which covered his body anticipated before his death the sentiment of hell torture.[f] Of these accusations, which we have so patiently copied, a part is refuted by its own absurdity; and in the private anecdotes of the life of princes, the lie is more easy as the detection is more difficult. Without adopting the pernicious maxim, that where much is alleged, something must be true, we can however discern, that Constantine V was dissolute and cruel. Calumny is more prone to exaggerate than to invent; and her licentious tongue is checked in some measure by the experience of the age and country to which she appeals. Of the bishops and monks, the generals and magistrates, who are said to have suffered under his reign, the numbers are recorded, the names were conspicuous, the execution was public, the mutilation visible and permanent.

### GOVERNMENT OF COPRONYMUS; THE SARACEN WARS

The Catholics hated the person and government of Copronymus; but even their hatred is a proof of their oppression. They dissemble the provocations which might excuse or justify his rigour; but even these provocations must gradually inflame his resentment, and harden his temper in the use or the abuse of despotism. Yet the character of the fifth Constantine was not devoid of merit, nor did his government always deserve the curses or the contempt of the Greeks. From the confession of his enemies, we are informed of the restoration of an ancient aqueduct, of the redemption of twenty-five hundred captives, of the uncommon plenty of the times, and of the new colonies with which he re-peopled Constantinople and the Thracian cities. They reluctantly praise his activity and courage; he was on horseback in the field at the head of his legions; and although the fortune of his arms was various, he triumphed by sea and land, on the Euphrates and the Danube, in civil[1] and barbarian war. Heretical praise must be cast into the scale, to counterbalance the weight of orthodox invective. The iconoclasts revered the virtues of the prince; forty years after his death, they still prayed before the tomb of the saint. A miraculous vision was propagated by fanaticism or fraud; and the Christian hero appeared on a milk-white steed, brandishing his lance against the pagans of Bulgaria: "An absurd fable," says the Catholic historian, "since Copronymus is chained with the demons in the abyss of hell."[g]

Constantine had no sooner found himself firmly established on the throne than he devoted his attention to completing the organisation of the empire traced out by his father. The constant attacks of the Saracens and Bulgarians called him frequently to the head of his armies, for the state of society rendered it dangerous to entrust large forces to the command of a subject. In the Byzantine Empire few individuals had any scruple in violating the

[1] His brother-in-law Artavasdos rebelled shortly after his accession and held Constantinople for two years before he could be expelled and imprisoned in a monastery.]

political constitution of their country, if by so doing they could increase their own power.

The incursions of the Saracens first required to be repressed. The empire of the caliphs was already distracted by the civil wars which preceded the fall of the Omayyad dynasty. Constantine took advantage of these troubles. He reconquered Germanicia and Doliche, and occupied for a time a considerable part of Commagene. The Saracens attempted to indemnify themselves for these losses by the conquest of Cyprus. This island appears to have been reconquered by Leo III, for it had been abandoned to the Mohammedans by Justinian II. The fleet of the caliph sailed from Alexandria, and landed an army at the port of Cerameia; but the fleet of the Cibyraiot theme arrived in time to blockade the enemy's ships, and of a thousand Mohammedan vessels three only escaped (748 A.D.). The war was continued. The Saracens invaded the empire almost every summer, but these incursions led to no permanent conquests. The mildness and tolerant government of the emperor of Romania (for that name began now to be applied to the part of Asia Minor belonging to the Byzantine Empire) was so celebrated in the East, in spite of his persecution of the image-worshippers at Constantinople, that many Christians escaped by sea from the dominions of the caliph Almansur to settle in those of Constantine.

### WARS WITH BULGARIA

The vicinity of the Bulgarians to Constantinople rendered them more dangerous enemies than the Saracens, though their power was much inferior. To resist their incursions, Constantine gradually repaired all the fortifications of the towns on the northern frontier, and then commenced fortifying the passes, until the Bulgarians found their predatory incursions attended with loss instead of gain. The king [Kormisos] invaded the empire with a powerful army. The Bulgarians carried their ravages up to the long wall; but though they derived assistance from the numerous Slavonian colonies settled in Thrace, they were defeated, and driven back into their own territory with great slaughter (757 A.D.).[1]

Constantine was always ready to carry the war into their territory. The difficulties of his enterprise were great, and he suffered several defeats; but his military talents and persevering energy prevented the Bulgarians from profiting by any partial success they obtained, and he soon regained the superiority. In the campaigns of 760, 763, and 765, Constantine marched far into Bulgaria, and carried off immense booty. In the year 766 he intended to complete the conquest of the country by opening the campaign at the commencement of spring. His fleet, which consisted of twenty-six hundred vessels, in which he had embarked a considerable body of infantry in order to enter the Danube, was assailed by one of those furious storms that often sweep the Euxine. The force which the emperor expected would soon render him master of Bulgaria was suddenly ruined. The shores of the Black Sea were covered with the wrecks of his ships and the bodies of his soldiers. Constantine immediately abandoned all thought of continuing the campaign, and employed his whole army in alleviating the calamity to the survivors, and in securing Christian burial and funeral honours to the dead. A truce was concluded with the enemy, and the Roman army beheld

[1 So Nicephorus[k] says, but Theophanes[j] says they returned unmolested.]

the emperor as eager to employ their services in the cause of humanity and religion, as he had ever been to lead them to the field of glory and conquest. His conduct on this occasion gained him as much popularity with the people of Constantinople as with the troops.

In the year 774 he again assembled an army of eighty thousand men, accompanied by a fleet of two thousand transports, and invaded Bulgaria. The Bulgarian monarch [Telerig] concluded a treaty of peace — which, however, was broken as soon as Constantine returned to his capital. But the emperor was not unprepared, and the moment he heard that the enemy had laid siege to Verzetia, one of the fortresses he had constructed to defend the frontier, he quitted Constantinople in the month of October, and, falling suddenly on the besiegers, routed their army with great slaughter. The following year his army was again ready to take the field; but as Constantine was on his way to join it he was attacked by a mortal illness, which compelled him to retrace his steps. Having embarked at Selymbria, in order to reach Constantinople with as little fatigue as possible, he died on board the vessel at the castle of Strongyle, just as he reached the walls of his capital, on the 23rd of September (775).

The long war with the Bulgarians had been carried on rather with the object of securing tranquillity to the northern provinces of the empire, than from any desire of a barren conquest. The necessity of reducing the Slavonian colonies in Thrace and Macedonia to complete obedience to the central administration, and of secluding them from all political communication with one another, or with their countrymen in Bulgaria, Servia, and Dalmatia, imposed on the emperor the necessity of maintaining strong bodies of troops, and suggested the policy of forming a line of Greek towns and Asiatic colonies along the northern frontier of the empire. When this was done, Constantine began to root out the brigandage, which had greatly extended itself during the anarchy which preceded his father's election, and which Leo had never been able to exterminate. Numerous bands lived by plunder, in a state of independence, within the bounds of the empire. They were called Skamars. Constantine rooted out these bands. A celebrated chief of the Skamars was publicly executed at Constantinople with the greatest barbarity, his living body being dissected by surgeons after the amputation of his hands and feet.

The habitual barbarity of legal punishments in the Byzantine Empire can hardly relieve the memory of Constantine from the reproach of cruelty, which this punishment proves he was ready to employ against the enemies of his authority, whether brigands or image-worshippers. His error, therefore, was not only passing laws against liberty of conscience — which was a fault in accordance with the spirit of the age — but in carrying these laws into execution with a cruelty offensive to human feelings. Yet on many occasions Constantine gave proofs of humanity, as well as of a desire to protect his subjects. The Slavonians on the coast of Thrace, having fitted out some piratical vessels, carried off many of the inhabitants of Tenedos, Imbros, and Samothrace, to sell them as slaves. The emperor on this occasion ransomed twenty-five hundred of his subjects, preferring to lower his own dignity by paying tribute to the pirates, rather than allow those who looked to him for protection to pine away their lives in hopeless misery. No other act of his reign shows so much real greatness of mind as this. He also concluded the convention with the Saracens for an exchange of prisoners, which has been already mentioned — one of the earliest examples of the exchanges between the Mohammedans and the Christians, which afterwards became

frequent on the Byzantine frontiers. Man was exchanged for man, woman for woman, and child for child. These conventions tended to save the lives of innumerable prisoners, and rendered the future wars between the Saracens and the Romans less barbarous.

Constantine was active in his internal administration, and his schemes for improving the condition of the inhabitants of his empire were carried out on a far more gigantic scale than modern governments have considered practicable. One of his plans for reviving agriculture in uncultivated districts was by re-peopling them with colonies of emigrants, to whom he secured favourable conditions and efficient protection. As usual under such circumstances, we find years of famine and plenty alternating in close succession. Yet the bitterest enemy of Constantine, the abbot Theophanes, confesses that his reign was one of general abundance. It is true, he reproaches him with loading the husbandmen with taxes; but he also accuses him of being a new Midas, who made gold so common that it became cheap. The abbot's political economy, it must be confessed, is not so orthodox as his calumny.

The time and attention of Constantine, during his whole reign, were principally engaged in military occupations. In the eyes of his contemporaries he was judged by his military conduct. His strategic abilities and indefatigable activity were the most striking characteristics of his administration. His campaigns, his financial measures, and the abundance they created, were known to all; but his ecclesiastical policy affected comparatively few. Yet by that policy his reign has been exclusively judged and condemned in modern times. The grounds of the condemnation are unjust. He has not, like his father, the merit of having saved an empire from ruin; but he may claim the honour of perfecting the reforms planned by his father, and of re-establishing the military power of the Roman Empire on a basis that perpetuated Byzantine supremacy for several centuries. Hitherto historians have treated the events of his reign as an accidental assemblage of facts; but surely, if he is to be rendered responsible for the persecution of the image-worshippers, in which he took comparatively little part, he deserves credit for his military successes and prosperous administration, since these were the result of his constant personal occupation. The history of his ecclesiastical measures, however, really possesses a deep interest, for they reflect with accuracy the feelings and ideas of millions of his subjects, as well as of the emperor.

### THE COUNCIL OF 754

When his power was consolidated, he steadily pursued his father's plans for centralising the ecclesiastical administration of the empire. To prepare for the final decision of the question, which probably, in his mind, related as much to the right of the emperor to govern the church, as to the question whether pictures were to be worshipped or not, he ordered the metropolitans and archbishops to hold provincial synods, in order to discipline the people for the execution of the edicts he proposed to carry in a general council of the Eastern church.

This general council was convoked at Constantinople in the year 754. It was attended by 338 bishops, forming the most numerous assembly of the Christian clergy which had ever been collected together for ecclesiastical legislation.

Neither the pope nor the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem sent representatives to this council, which was solely composed of the

Byzantine clergy, so that it had no right to assume the rank of an ecumenical council. Its decisions were all against image-worship, which it declared to be contrary to Scripture. It proclaimed the use of images and pictures in churches to be a pagan and anti-Christian practice, the abolition of which was necessary to avoid leading Christians into temptation. Even the use of the crucifix was condemned, on the ground that the only true symbol of the incarnation was the bread and wine which Christ had commanded to be received for the remission of sins.

In its opposition to the worship of pictures, the council was led into the display of some animosity against painting itself; and every attempt at embodying sacred subjects by what it styled the dead and accursed art, foolishly invented by the pagans, was strongly condemned. The common people were thus deprived of a source of ideas, which, though liable to abuse, tended in general to civilise their minds, and might awaken noble thoughts and religious aspirations. We may fully agree with the iconoclasts in the religious importance of not worshipping images, and not allowing the people to prostrate themselves on the pavements of churches before pictures of saints, whether said to be painted by human artists or miraculous agency; while at the same time we think that the walls of the vestibules or porticoes of sacred edifices may with propriety be adorned with pictures representing those sacred subjects most likely to awaken feelings of Christian charity. It is by embodying and ennobling the expression of feelings common to all mankind, that modern artists can alone unite in their works that combination of truth with the glow of creative imagination which gives a divine stamp to many pagan works.

There is nothing in the circle of human affairs so democratic as art. The council of 754, however, deemed that it was necessary to sacrifice art to the purity of religion. "The godless art of painting" was proscribed. All who manufactured crucifixes or sacred paintings for worship, in public or private, whether laymen or monks, were ordered to be excommunicated by the church and punished by the state. At the same time, in order to guard against the indiscriminate destruction of sacred buildings and shrines possessing valuable ornaments and rich plate and jewels, by iconoclastic zeal, or under its pretext, the council commanded that no alteration was to be made in existing churches, without the special permission of the patriarch and the emperor — a regulation bearing strong marks of the fiscal rapacity of the central treasury of the Roman Empire. The bigotry of the age was displayed in the anathema which this council pronounced against three of the most distinguished and virtuous advocates of image-worship, Germanus, the patriarch of Constantinople, George of Cyprus, and John Damascenus, the last of the fathers of the Greek church. The acts of this council, however, are only known from the garbled portions preserved by its enemies in the acts of the second council of Nicæa and the hostile historians.[n]

### LEO IV AND CONSTANTINE VI (775–797 A.D.)

Leo IV, the son of the fifth, and the father of the sixth Constantine, was of a feeble constitution both of mind and body, and the principal care of his reign was the settlement of the succession. The association of the young Constantine was urged by the officious zeal of his subjects; and the emperor, conscious of his decay, complied, after a prudent hesitation, with their unanimous wishes. The royal infant, at the age of five years, was

crowned with his mother Irene; and the national consent was ratified by every circumstance of pomp and solemnity that could dazzle the eyes, or bind the conscience, of the Greeks. An oath of fidelity was administered in the palace, the church, and the hippodrome, to the several orders of the state, who adjured the holy names of the son and mother of God.

The first to swear, and the first to violate their oath, were the five sons of Copronymus by a second marriage; and the story of these princes is singular and tragic. The right of primogeniture excluded them from the throne; the injustice of their elder brother defrauded them of a legacy of amounting to about £2,000,000; some vain titles were not deemed a sufficient compensation for wealth and power; and they repeatedly conspired against their nephew, before and after the death of his father (780). The first attempt was pardoned; for the second offence they were condemned to the ecclesiastical state; and for the third treason, Nicephorus, the eldest and most guilty, was deprived of his eyes, and his four brothers, Christopher, Nicetas, Anthemeus, and Eudoxas, were punished, as a milder sentence, by the amputation of their tongues.

For himself, the emperor had chosen a barbarian wife, the daughter of the khan of the Khazars; but in the marriage of his heir, he preferred an Athenian virgin, an orphan, seventeen years old, whose sole fortune must have consisted in her personal accomplishments. The nuptials of Leo and Irene were celebrated with royal pomp; she soon acquired the love and confidence of a feeble husband, and in his testament he declared the empress guardian of the Roman world, and of their son Constantine VI, who was no more than ten years of age. During his childhood Irene most ably and assiduously discharged, in her public administration, the duties of a faithful mother; and her zeal in the restoration of images has deserved the name and honours of a saint, which she still occupies in the Greek calendar. But the emperor attained the maturity of youth; the maternal yoke became more grievous; and he listened to the favourites of his own age, who shared his pleasures and were ambitious of sharing his power. Their reasons convinced him of his right, their praises of his ability to reign; and he consented to reward the services of Irene by a perpetual banishment to the isle of Sicily. But her vigilance and penetration easily disconcerted their rash projects; a similar, or more severe, punishment was retaliated on themselves and their advisers; and Irene inflicted on the ungrateful prince the chastisement of a boy. After this contest the mother and the son were at the head of two domestic factions; and instead of mild influence and voluntary obedience, she held in chains a captive and an enemy. The empress was overthrown by the abuse of victory; the oath of fidelity which she exacted to herself alone, was pronounced with reluctant murmurs; and the bold refusal of the Armenian guards encouraged a free and general declaration that Constantine VI was the lawful emperor of the Romans. In this character he ascended his hereditary throne, and dismissed Irene to a life of solitude and repose.

### THE EMPRESS IRENE

A powerful conspiracy was formed for the restoration of Irene; and the secret, though widely diffused, was faithfully kept above eight months, till the emperor, suspicious of his danger, escaped from Constantinople, with the design of appealing to the provinces and armies. By this hasty flight, the empress was left on the brink of the precipice; yet before she implored

[776-792 A.D.]

the mercy of her son, Irene addressed a private epistle to the friends whom she had placed about his person, with a menace that unless they accomplished, she would reveal, their treason. Their fear rendered them intrepid; they seized the emperor on the Asiatic shore, and he was transported to the porphyry apartment of the palace where he had first seen the light. In the mind of Irene, ambition had stifled every sentiment of humanity and nature; and it was decreed in her bloody council that Constantine should be rendered incapable of the throne. The blind son of Irene survived many years, oppressed by the court, and forgotten by the world; the Isaurian dynasty was silently extinguished; and the memory of Constantine was recalled only by the nuptials of his daughter Euphrosyne with the emperor Michael II.*g*

## IRENE AND ICONOCLASM

The empress was known to favour image-worship. The national vanity of the Greeks and the religious feelings of the orthodox required the sanction of a constitutional public authority before the laws against image-worship could be openly repealed. The Byzantine Empire had at this time an ecclesiastical though not a political constitution. The will of the sovereign was alone insufficient to change an organic law, forming part of the ecclesiastical administration of the empire. It was necessary to convoke a general council to legalise image-worship; and to render such a council a fit instrument for the proposed revolution, much arrangement was necessary. No person was ever endued with greater talents for removing opposition and conciliating personal support than the empress. The patriarch Paul, a decided iconoclast, was induced to resign, and declare that he repented of his hostility to image-worship, because it had cut off the church of Constantinople from communion with the rest of the Christian world. This declaration pointed out the necessity of holding a general council in order to re-establish that communion.

The crisis required a new patriarch of stainless character, great ability, and perfect acquaintance with the party connections and individual characters of the leading bishops. No person could be selected from among the dignitaries of the church who had been generally appointed by iconoclast emperors. The choice of Irene fell on a civilian — Tarasius, the chief secretary of the imperial cabinet, — a man of noble birth, considerable popularity, and a high reputation for learning and probity.

The iconoclasts were still strong in the capital, and the opposition of the soldiery was excited by the determination of Tarasius to re-establish image-worship. They openly declared that they would not allow a council of the church to be held, nor permit the ecclesiastics of their party to be unjustly treated by the court. More than one tumult warned the empress that no council could be held at Constantinople. It required nearly three years to smooth the way for the meeting of the council, which was at length held at Nicæa in September, 787. Three hundred and sixty-seven members attended, of whom, however, not a few were abbots and monks, who assumed the title of confessors from having been ejected from their monasteries by the decrees of the iconoclast sovereigns. The secretary of the two commissioners who represented the imperial authority was Nicephorus the historian, subsequently patriarch of Constantinople. His sketch of the history of the empire, from the years 602 to 770, is a valuable work, and indicates that he was a man of judgment whenever his perceptions were not obscured by theological and

ecclesiastical prejudices. Two other eminent Byzantine writers were also present. George, called Syncellus, from the office he held under the patriarch Tarasius. He has left us a chronological work which has preserved the knowledge of many important facts recorded by no other ancient authority. Theophanes, the friend and companion of the Syncellus, has continued this work; and his chronography of Roman and Byzantine history, with all its faults, forms the best picture of the condition of the empire that we possess for a long period. Theophanes enjoyed the honour of becoming, at a later day, a confessor in the cause of image-worship. He was exiled from a monastery which he had founded, and died in the island of Samothrace, in 817 A.D.

The second council of Nicæa had no better title than the iconoclast council of Constantinople to be regarded as a general council of the church. The pope Adrian, indeed, sent deputies from the Latin church; but the churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, whose patriarchs were groaning under the government of the caliphs, did not dare to communicate with foreign authorities.

The second council of Nicæa authorised the worship of images as an orthodox practice. Forged passages, pretending to be extracts from the earlier fathers, and genuine quotations from the modern, were cited in favour of the practice. Simony was already a prevailing evil in the Greek church. Many of the bishops had purchased their sees, and most of these naturally preferred doing violence to their opinions rather than lose their revenues. From this cause, unanimity was easily obtained by court influence. The council decided, that not only was the cross an object of reverence, but also that the images of Christ, and the pictures of the Virgin Mary — of angels, saints, and holy men, whether painted in colours, or worked in embroidery in sacred ornaments, or formed in mosaic in the walls of churches — were all lawful objects of worship. At the same time, in order to guard against the accusation of idolatry, it was declared that the worship of an image, which is merely a sign of reverence, must not be confounded with the adoration due only to God. The council of Constantinople held in 754 was declared heretical, and all who maintained its doctrines, and condemned the use of images, were anathematised. The patriarchs Anastasius, Constantinus, and Nicetas were especially doomed to eternal condemnation.

The pope adopted the decrees of this council, but he refused to confirm them officially, because the empress delayed restoring the estates of St. Peter's patrimony. In the countries of western Europe which had formed parts of the Western Empire, the superstitions of the image-worshippers were viewed with as much dissatisfaction as the fanaticism of the iconoclasts; and the council of Nicæa was as much condemned as that of Constantinople by a large body of enlightened ecclesiastics. The public mind in the West was almost as much divided as in the East; and if a general council of the Latin church had been assembled, its unbiassed decisions would probably have been at variance with those supported by the pope and the council of Nicæa.

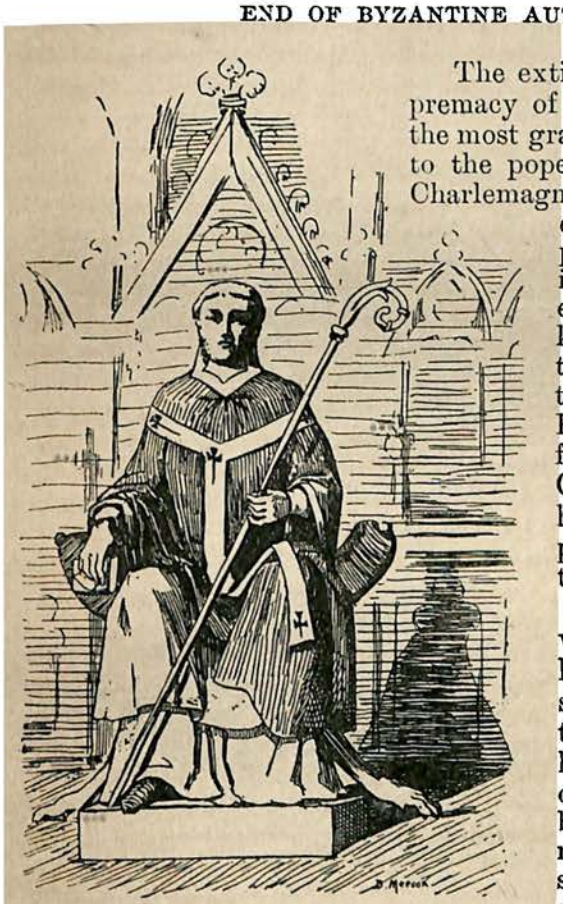
Charlemagne published a refutation of the doctrines of this council on the subject of image-worship. His work, called the *Caroline Books*, consists of four parts, and was certainly composed under his immediate personal superintendence, though he was doubtless incapable of writing it himself.

The dark night of mediæval ignorance and local prejudices had not yet settled on the West; nor had feudal anarchy confined the ideas and wants of society to the narrow sphere of provincial interests. The aspect of public opinion alarmed Pope Adrian, whose interests required that the relations

[797-802 A.D.]

of the West and East should not become friendly. His position, however, rendered him more suspicious of Constantine and Irene, in spite of their orthodoxy, than of Charlemagne, with all his heterodox ideas. The Frank monarch, though he differed in ecclesiastical opinions, was sure to be a political protector. The pope consequently laboured to foment the jealousy that reigned between the Frank and Byzantine governments concerning Italy, where the commercial relations of the Greeks still counterbalanced the military influence of the Franks. His calumnies must have sunk deep into the public mind, and tended to impress on western nations that aversion to the Greeks, which was subsequently increased by mercantile jealousy and religious strife.

## END OF BYZANTINE AUTHORITY AT ROME



ROBES OF AN ARCHBISHOP, EIGHTH CENTURY

The extinction of the last traces of the supremacy of the Eastern Empire at Rome was the most gratifying result of their machinations to the popes. On Christmas Day, 800 A.D., Charlemagne revived the existence of the Western Empire, and received the imperial crown from Pope Leo III in the church of St. Peter. Hitherto the Frank monarch had acknowledged a titular supremacy in the Eastern Empire, and had borne the title of patrician of the Roman Empire, as a mark of dignity conferred on him by the emperors of Constantinople; but he now raised himself to an equality with the emperors of the East, by assuming the title of emperor of the West.[n]

On earth, the crimes of Irene were left five years unpunished; her reign was crowned with external splendour;[1] and if she could silence the voice of conscience, she neither heard nor regarded the reproaches of mankind. The Roman world bowed to the government of a female; and as she moved through the streets of Constantinople, the reins of four milk-white steeds were held by as many patricians, who marched on foot before the golden chariot of their queen. But these patricians were for the most part eunuchs; raised, enriched, entrusted with the first dignities of the empire, they basely conspired against their benefactress; the great treasurer Nicephorus was secretly invested with the purple; her successor

[1 During the reigns of Leo IV, Constantine VI, and Irene there were frequent conflicts with the Saracens, the Bulgarians, and with the troops of Charlemagne, who at one time purposed to reunite the old Roman Empire by marrying Irene, on which Bury[h] comments that such a marriage of ill-assorted nations would have been followed by a speedy divorce.]

was introduced into the palace, and crowned at St. Sophia by the venal patriarch. In their first interview, she recapitulated with dignity the revolutions of her life, gently accused the perfidy of Nicephorus, insinuated that he owed his life to her unsuspicious clemency, and, for the throne and treasures which she resigned, solicited a decent and honourable retreat. His avarice refused this modest compensation; and in her exile on the isle of Lesbos, the empress earned a scanty subsistence by the labours of her distaff.

### NICEPHORUS (802–811 A.D.) AND MICHAEL I (812–813 A.D.)

Many tyrants have reigned undoubtedly more criminal than Nicephorus, but none perhaps have more deeply incurred the universal abhorrence of their people. His character was stained with the three odious vices of hypocrisy, ingratitude, and avarice; his want of virtue was not redeemed by any superior talents, nor his want of talents by any pleasing qualifications. Unskilful and unfortunate in war, Nicephorus was vanquished by the Saracens, and slain by the Bulgarians; and the advantage of his death overbalanced, in the public opinion, the destruction of a Roman army. His son and heir Stauracius escaped from the field with a mortal wound: yet six months of an expiring life were sufficient to refute his indecent, though popular, declaration, that he would in all things avoid the example of his father.

On the near prospect of his decease, Michael, the great master of the palace, and the husband of his sister Procopia, was named by every person of the palace and city, except by his envious brother. Tenacious of a sceptre now falling from his hand, he conspired against the life of his successor, and cherished the idea of changing to a democracy the Roman Empire. But these rash projects served only to inflame the zeal of the people, and to remove the scruples of the candidate: Michael I accepted the purple, and before he sank into the grave, the son of Nicephorus implored the clemency of his new sovereign. Had Michael in an age of peace ascended an hereditary throne, he might have reigned and died the father of his people: but his mild virtues were adapted to the shade of private life, nor was he capable of controlling the ambition of his equals, or of resisting the arms of the victorious Bulgarians. While his want of ability and success exposed him to the contempt of the soldiers, the masculine spirit of his wife Procopia awakened their indignation.

Even the Greeks of the ninth century were provoked by the insolence of a female who, in the front of the standards, presumed to direct their discipline and animate their valour; and their licentious clamours advised the new Semiramis to reverence the majesty of a Roman camp. After an unsuccessful campaign, the emperor left, in their winter quarters of Thrace, a disaffected army under the command of his enemies; and their artful eloquence persuaded the soldiers to break the dominion of the eunuchs, to degrade the husband of Procopia, and to assert the right of a military election. They marched towards the capital; yet the clergy, the senate, and the people of Constantinople adhered to the cause of Michael; and the troops and treasures of Asia might have protracted the mischiefs of civil war. But his humanity (by the ambitious it will be termed his weakness) protested, that not a drop of Christian blood should be shed in his quarrel, and his messengers presented the conquerors with the keys of the city and the palace. They were disarmed by his innocence and submission; his life

and his eyes were spared; and the imperial monk enjoyed the comforts of solitude and religion above thirty-two years after he had been stripped of the purple and separated from his wife.

## LEO THE ARMENIAN (813–820 A.D.)

A rebel in the time of Nicephorus, the famous and unfortunate Bardanes, had once the curiosity to consult an Asiatic prophet, who after prognosticating his fall, announced the fortunes of his three principal officers, Leo the Armenian, Michael the Phrygian, and Thomas the Cappadocian, the successive reigns of the two former, the fruitless and fatal enterprise of the third. This prediction was verified, or rather was produced, by the event. Ten years afterwards, when the Thracian camp rejected the husband of Procopia, the crown was presented to the same Leo, the first in military rank and the secret author of the mutiny. As he affected to hesitate — "with this sword," said his companion Michael, "I will open the gates of Constantinople to your imperial sway; or instantly plunge it into your bosom, if you obstinately resist the just desires of your fellow-soldiers." The compliance of the Armenian was rewarded with the empire, and he reigned seven years and a half under the name of Leo V.*g*

Six days after his coronation, the Bulgarian king, Crumn, assailed Constantinople; a plot to assassinate the Bulgarian failed, but ample revenge was taken in the widespread pillage and the carrying off to Bulgaria of fifty thousand prisoners. Crumn died while preparing a new invasion; Leo destroyed his army at Mesembria and ravaged Bulgaria (814).*a*

Educated in a camp, and ignorant both of laws and letters, he introduced into his civil government the rigour and even cruelty of military discipline; but if his severity was sometimes dangerous to the innocent, it was always formidable to the guilty. His religious inconstancy was taxed by the epithet of chameleon, but the Catholics have acknowledged, by the voice of a saint and confessors, that the life of the iconoclast[1] was useful to the republic. The zeal of his companion Michael was repaid with riches, honours, and military command; and his subordinate talents were beneficially employed in the public service. Yet the Phrygian was dissatisfied at receiving as a favour a scanty portion of the imperial prize, which he had bestowed on his equal; and his discontent, which sometimes evaporated in a hasty discourse, at length assumed a more threatening and hostile aspect against a prince whom he represented as a cruel tyrant. That tyrant, however, repeatedly detected, warned, and dismissed the old companion of his arms, till fear and resentment prevailed over gratitude; and Michael, after a scrutiny into his actions and designs, was convicted of treasons, and sentenced to be burned alive in the furnace of the private baths. The devout humanity of the empress Theophano was fatal to her husband and family. A solemn day, the twenty-fifth of December, had been fixed for the execution; she urged that the anniversary of the Saviour's birth would be profaned by this inhuman spectacle, and Leo consented with reluctance to a decent respite.

On the great festivals, a chosen band of priests and chanters was admitted into the palace by a private gate, to sing matins in the chapel; and Leo, who regulated with the same strictness the discipline of the choir and of the camp, was seldom absent from these early devotions. In the ecclesiastical

[1] He called a General Council which anathematised Tarasius and Nicephorus, and, repealing the acts of the Council of Nicæa, reasserted those of 754.]

habit, but with swords under their robes, the conspirators mingled with the procession, lurked in the angles of the chapel, and expected, as the signal of murder, the intonation of the first psalm by the emperor himself. The imperfect light, and the uniformity of dress, might have favoured his escape, while their assault was pointed against a harmless priest; but they soon discovered their mistake, and encompassed on all sides the royal victim. Without a weapon and without a friend, he grasped a weighty cross, and stood at bay against the hunters of his life; but as he asked for mercy, — "This is the hour, not of mercy, but of vengeance," was the inexorable reply. The stroke of a well-aimed sword separated from his body the right arm and the cross, and Leo the Armenian was slain at the foot of the altar.

## The Amorian Dynasty (820–867 A.D.)

### MICHAEL II (820–829 A.D.)

A memorable reverse of fortune was displayed in Michael II, who, from a defect in his speech, was surnamed the Stammerer. He was snatched from the fiery furnace to the sovereignty of an empire; and as in the tumult a smith could not readily be found, the fetters remained on his legs several hours after he was seated on the throne of the Cæsars. The royal blood, which had been the price of his elevation, was unprofitably spent; in the purple he retained the ignoble vices of his origin; and Michael lost his provinces with as supine indifference as if they had been the inheritance of his fathers.[1] His title was disputed by Thomas, the last of the military triumvirate, who transported into Europe fourscore thousand barbarians from the banks of the Tigris and the shores of the Caspian. He formed the siege of Constantinople; but the capital was defended with spiritual and carnal weapons; a Bulgarian king assaulted the camp of the Orientals, and Thomas had the misfortune, or the weakness, to fall alive into the power of the conqueror. The hands and feet of the rebel were amputated; he was placed on an ass, and, amidst the insults of the people, was led through the streets, which he sprinkled with his blood. After the death of his first wife, the emperor, at the request of the senate, drew from her monastery Euphrosyne, the daughter of Constantine VI. Her august birth might justify a stipulation in the marriage contract that her children should equally share the empire with their elder brother. But the nuptials of Michael and Euphrosyne were barren; and she was content with the title of mother of Theophilus, his son and successor.

### THEOPHILUS (829–842 A.D.)

The character of Theophilus is a rare example in which religious zeal has allowed, and perhaps magnified, the virtues of a heretic and a persecutor. His valour was often felt by the enemies, and his justice by the subjects, of the monarchy; but the valour of Theophilus was rash and fruitless, and

[1 "'Crete and Sicily' were conquered by the Saracens without offering the resistance that might have been expected from the wealth and number of their inhabitants. Indeed, we are compelled to infer that the change from the orthodox sway of the emperors of Constantinople to the domination of the Mohammedans was not considered by the majority of the Greeks of Crete and Sicily so severe a calamity as we generally believe." — Finlay.]

his justice arbitrary and cruel. He displayed the banner of the cross against the Saracens; but his five expeditions were concluded by a signal overthrow (838); Amorium, the native city of his ancestors, was levelled with the ground, and from his military toils, he derived only the surname of the Unfortunate. The wisdom of a sovereign is comprised in the institution of laws and the choice of magistrates, and while he seems without action, his civil government revolves round his centre with the silence and order of the planetary system. But the justice of Theophilus was fashioned on the model of the oriental despots, who, in personal and irregular acts of authority, consult the reason or passion of the moment, without measuring the sentence by the law, or the penalty by the offence. For some venial offences, some defect of equity or vigilance, the principal ministers, a prefect, a quæstor, a captain of the guards, were banished, or mutilated, or scalded with boiling pitch, or burned alive in the hippodrome; and as these dreadful examples might be the effects of error or caprice, they must have alienated from his service the best and wisest of the citizens.

Theophilus might inflict a tardy vengeance on the assassins of Leo and the saviours of his father; but he enjoyed the fruits of their crime; and his jealous tyranny sacrificed a brother and a prince to the future safety of his life. A Persian of the race of the Sassanidæ died in poverty and exile at Constantinople, leaving an only son, the issue of a plebeian marriage. At the age of twelve years, the royal birth of Theophobus was revealed, and his merit was not unworthy of his birth. He was educated in the Byzantine palace, a Christian and a soldier; advanced with rapid steps in the career of fortune and glory; received the hand of the emperor's sister; and was promoted to the command of thirty thousand Persians, who, like his father, had fled from the Mohammedan conquerors.

## THEODORA AND MICHAEL THE DRUNKARD (842-867 A.D.)

These troops, doubly infected with mercenary and fanatic vices, were desirous of revolting against their benefactor, and erecting the standard of their native king: but the loyal Theophobus rejected their offers, disconcerted their schemes, and escaped from their hands to the camp or palace of his royal brother. A generous confidence might have secured a faithful and able guardian for his wife and his infant son, to whom Theophilus, in the flower of his age, was compelled to leave the inheritance of the empire. But his jealousy was exasperated by envy and disease: he feared the dangerous virtues which might either support or oppress their infancy and weakness; and the dying emperor demanded the head of the Persian prince. With savage delight he recognised the familiar features of his brother: "Thou art no longer Theophobus," he said; and sinking on his couch, he added with a faltering voice, "Soon, too soon, I shall be no more Theophilus!"

Yet his last choice entrusted his wife Theodora with the guardianship of the empire and her son Michael, who was left an orphan in the fifth year of his age. The restoration of images, and the final extirpation of the Iconoclasts,[1] has endeared her name to the devotion of the Greeks; but in the fervour of religious zeal, Theodora entertained a grateful regard for the memory and salvation of her husband. After thirteen years of a prudent

[1 "It is the boast of orthodox historians that ten thousand Paulicians perished in this manner. Far greater numbers, however, escaped into the province of Melitene, where the Saracen emir granted them protection, and assisted them to plan schemes of revenge."—FINLAY.n]

and frugal administration, she perceived the decline of her influence; but the second Irene imitated only the virtues of her predecessor. Instead of conspiring against the life or government of her son, she retired, without a struggle, though not without a murmur, to the solitude of private life, deploring the ingratitude, the vices, and the inevitable ruin of the worthless youth.

Among the successors of Nero and Elagabalus, we have not hitherto found the imitation of their vices, the character of a Roman prince who considered pleasure as the object of life, and virtue as the enemy of pleasure. Whatever might have been the maternal care of Theodora in the education of Michael III, her unfortunate son was a king before he was a man. If the ambitious mother laboured to check the progress of reason, she could not cool the ebullition of passion; and her selfish policy was justly repaid by the contempt and ingratitude of the headstrong youth. At the age of eighteen he rejected her authority, without feeling his own incapacity to govern the empire and himself. With Theodora, all gravity and wisdom retired from the court: their place was supplied by the alternate dominion of vice and folly; and it was impossible, without forfeiting the public esteem, to acquire or preserve the favour of the emperor. The millions of gold and silver which had been accumulated for the service of the state, were lavished on the vilest of men, who flattered his passions and shared his pleasures; and in a reign of thirteen years, the richest of sovereigns was compelled to strip the palace and the churches of their precious furniture. Like Nero, he delighted in the amusements of the theatre, and sighed to be surpassed in the accomplishments in which he should have blushed to excel. Yet the studies of Nero in music and poetry betrayed some symptoms of a liberal taste; the more ignoble arts of the son of Theophilus were confined to the chariot race of the hippodrome.

But the most extraordinary feature in the character of Michael is the profane mockery of the religion of his country. The superstition of the Greeks might indeed excite the smile of a philosopher; but his smile would have been rational and temperate, and he must have condemned the ignorant folly of a youth who insulted the objects of public veneration. A buffoon of the court was invested in the robes of the patriarch; his twelve metropolitans, among whom the emperor was ranked, assumed their ecclesiastical garments; they used or abused the sacred vessels of the altar; and, in their bacchanalian feasts, the holy communion was administered in a nauseous compound of vinegar and mustard. Nor were these impious spectacles concealed from the eyes of the city. On the day of a solemn festival, the emperor, and his bishops or buffoons, rode on asses through the streets, encountered the true patriarch at the head of his clergy, and, by their licentious shouts and obscene gestures, disordered the gravity of the Christian procession.[1] The devotion of Michael appeared only in some offence to reason or piety; he received his theatrical crowns from the statue of the Virgin; and an imperial tomb was violated for the sake of burning the bones of Constantine the Iconoclast. By this extravagant conduct the son of Theophilus became as contemptible as he was odious; every citizen was impatient for the deliverance of his country; and even the favourites of the moment were apprehensive that a caprice might snatch away what a caprice had bestowed. In the thirtieth year of his age, and in the hour of intoxication and sleep, Michael III was murdered in his chamber by the founder of

[1] Finlay[n] thinks that some of these stories may be the inventions of flatterers of Michael's assassin and successor, Basil.]

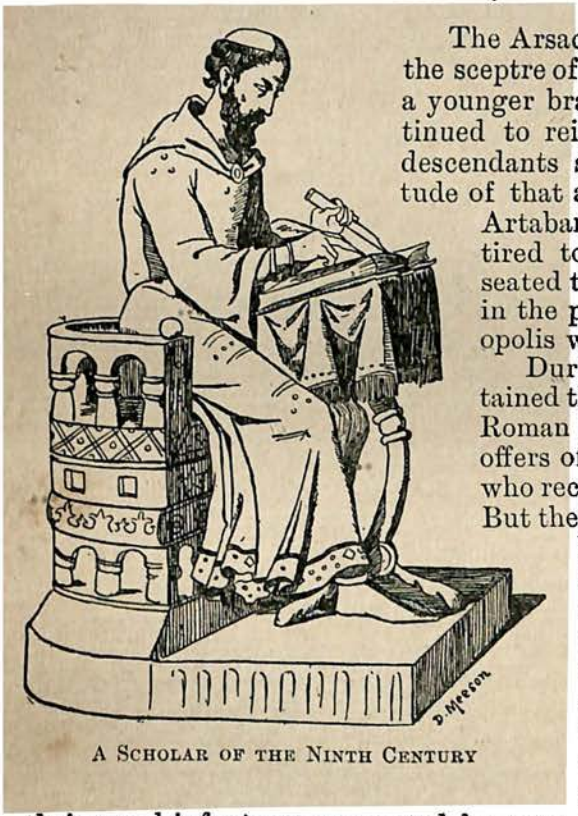
[867 A.D.]

a new dynasty, whom the emperor had raised to an equality of rank and power.[g]

It was in his reign that Photius was illegally made Patriarch and such a dissension created that the Roman pope was appealed to, as is described in the next volume under the Papacy. In 865 also the Russians made a raid on Constantinople. This was their first appearance to the civilized world, and though they were driven off, they made a deep impression by their savagery.[a]

## The Basilian or Macedonian Dynasty (867–1057 A.D.)

### BASIL (867–886 A.D.)



A Scholar of the Ninth Century

The Arsacides, the rivals of Rome, possessed the sceptre of the East near four hundred years; a younger branch of these Parthian kings continued to reign in Armenia; and their royal descendants survived the partition and servitude of that ancient monarchy. Two of these, Artabanus and Chlienes, escaped or retired to the court of Leo I, his bounty seated them in a safe and hospitable exile, in the provinces of Macedonia; Hadrianopolis was their final settlement.

During several generations they maintained the dignity of their birth; and their Roman patriotism rejected the tempting offers of the Persian and Arabian powers, who recalled them to their native country. But their splendour was insensibly clouded by time and poverty; and the father of Basil was reduced to a small farm, which he cultivated with his own hands; yet he scorned to disgrace the blood of the Arsacides by a plebeian alliance; his wife, a widow of Hadrianopolis, was pleased to count among her ancestors the great Constantine; and their royal infant was connected by some dark affinity of lineage or country with the Macedonian Alexander. No sooner was he born than the cradle of Basil, his family, and his city, were swept away by an inundation of the Bulgarians; he was educated a slave in a foreign land; and in this severe discipline he acquired the hardiness of body and flexibility of mind which promoted his future elevation. In the age of youth or manhood he shared the deliverance of the Roman captives, who generously broke their fetters, marched through Bulgaria to the shores of the Euxine, defeated two armies of barbarians, embarked in the ships which had been stationed for their reception, and returned to Constantinople, from whence they were distributed to their respective homes. But the freedom of Basil was naked and destitute; his farm was ruined by the calamities of war. After his father's death, his manual labour or service could no longer support a family of orphans; and he resolved to seek a more conspicuous

theatre, in which every virtue and every vice may lead to the paths of greatness.

The first night of his arrival at Constantinople, without friends or money, the weary pilgrim slept on the steps of the church of St. Diomede; he was fed by the casual hospitality of a monk, and was introduced to the service of a cousin and namesake of the emperor Theophilus, who, though himself of a diminutive person, was always followed by a train of tall and handsome domestics. Basil attended his patron to the government of Peloponnesus; eclipsed, by his personal merit, the birth and dignity of Theophilus, and formed a useful connection with a wealthy and charitable matron of Patras. Her spiritual or carnal love embraced the young adventurer, whom she adopted as her son. Danielis presented him with thirty slaves; and the produce of her bounty was expended in the support of his brothers, and the purchase of some large estates in Macedonia. His gratitude or ambition still attached him to the service of Theophilus; and a lucky accident recommended him to the notice of the court.

A famous wrestler, in the train of the Bulgarian ambassadors, had defied, at the royal banquet, the boldest and most robust of the Greeks. The strength of Basil was praised; he accepted the challenge, and the barbarian champion was overthrown at the first onset. A beautiful but vicious horse was condemned to be hamstrung; it was subdued by the dexterity and courage of the servant of Theophilus; and his conqueror was promoted to an honourable rank in the imperial stables. But it was impossible to obtain the confidence of Michael without complying with his vices; and his new favourite, the great chamberlain of the palace, was raised and supported by a disgraceful marriage with a royal concubine, and the dishonour of his sister who succeeded to her place.

The public administration had been abandoned to the cæsar Bardas, the brother and enemy of Theodora; but the arts of female influence persuaded Michael to hate and to fear his uncle; he was drawn from Constantinople, under the pretext of a Cretan expedition, and stabbed in the tent of audience, by the sword of the chamberlain and in the presence of the emperor. About a month after this execution, Basil was invested with the title of Augustus and the government of the empire. He supported this unequal association till his influence was fortified by popular esteem. His life was endangered by the caprice of the emperor; and his dignity was profaned by a second colleague, who had rowed in the galleys. Yet the murder of his benefactor must be condemned as an act of ingratitude and treason; and the churches which he dedicated to the name of St. Michael were a poor and puerile expiation of his guilt.

But the most solid praise of Basil is drawn from the comparison of a ruined and a flourishing monarchy, that which he wrested from the dissolute Michael, and that which he bequeathed to the Macedonian dynasty.[1] The evils which had been sanctified by time and example were corrected by his master-hand; and he revived, if not the national spirit, at least the order and majesty of the Roman Empire. His application was indefatigable, his temper cool, his understanding vigorous and decisive; and in his practice he observed that rare and salutary moderation, which pursues each virtue at an equal distance between the opposite vices. His military service had been confined to the palace; nor was the emperor endowed with the spirit or the talents of a warrior. Yet under his reign the Roman arms were again for-

[1 "Basil founded," says Finlay *n*, "the largest dynasty that ruled in the Byzantine empire."]

midable to the barbarians.[1] As soon as he had formed a new army by discipline and exercise, he appeared in person on the banks of the Euphrates, curbed the pride of the Saracens, and suppressed the dangerous though just revolt of the Manichæans.[2]

But his principal merit was in the civil administration of the finances and of the laws. To replenish an exhausted treasury, it was proposed to resume the lavish and ill-placed gifts of his predecessor; his prudence abated one moiety of the restitution, and a sum of £1,200,000 sterling was instantly procured to answer the most pressing demands, and to allow some space for the mature operations of economy. Among the various schemes for the improvement of the revenue, a new mode was suggested of capitation, or tribute, which would have too much depended on the arbitrary discretion of the assessors. A sufficient list of honest and able agents was instantly produced by the minister; but, on the more careful scrutiny of Basil himself, only two could be found who might be safely entrusted with such dangerous powers; and they justified his esteem by declining his confidence. But the serious and successful diligence of the emperor established by degrees an equitable balance of property and payment, of receipt and expenditure; a peculiar fund was appropriated to each service; and a public method secured the interest of the prince and the property of the people. After reforming the luxury, he assigned two patrimonial estates to supply the decent plenty of the imperial table; the contributions of the subject were reserved for his defence; and the residue was employed in the embellishment of the capital and provinces.

In the character of a judge he was assiduous and impartial, desirous to save, but not afraid to strike; the oppressors of the people were severely chastised, but his personal foes, whom it might be unsafe to pardon, were condemned, after the loss of their eyes, to a life of solitude and repentance. The change of language and manners demanded a revision of the obsolete jurisprudence of Justinian. The voluminous body of his *Institutes*, *Pandects*, *Code*, and *Novels* was digested under forty titles, in the Greek idiom; and the *Basilica*,[3] which were improved and completed by his son and grandson, must be referred to the genius of the original founder of their race. This glorious reign was terminated by an accident in the chase. A furious stag entangled his horns in the belt of Basil, and raised him from his horse; he was rescued by an attendant, who cut the belt and slew the animal; but the fall or the fever exhausted the strength of the aged monarch, and he expired in the palace amidst the tears of his family and people. If he struck off the head of the faithful servant for presuming to draw his sword against his sovereign, the pride of despotism, which had lain dormant in his life, revived in the last moments of despair, when he no longer wanted or valued the opinion of mankind.

Of the four sons of the emperor, Constantine died before his father, whose grief and credulity were amused by a flattering impostor and a vain apparition.[4] Stephen, the youngest, was content with the honours of a patriarch

[1] The Saracens were driven out of various Italian strongholds which gave allegiance to Constantinople. But Sicily was lost in 878, and though Cyprus was regained, it was also lost again.]

[2] That is, the colony of Paulician fugitives formed at Tephrike after the persecutions of Theodora.]

[3] "The Basilica remained the law of the Byzantine empire," says Finlay,[n] "till its conquest by the Franks, and it continued in use as the national law of the Greeks at Nicæa, Constantinople, and Trebizond and in the Morea, until they were conquered by the Ottomans."]

[4] Constantine was proclaimed Augustus in 868 and died in 879. He was the eighth of the name according to Eckhel and the ninth according to Humphreys.]

and a saint; both Leo and Alexander alike were invested with the purple, but the powers of government were solely exercised by the elder brother.[g]

## LEO VI THE PHILOSOPHER (886-911 A.D.)

The Saracen War continued during his reign; the chief evils suffered being the loss of the second city of the empire, Thessalonica, which was taken after a bitter siege, 904, and sacked with great ruthlessness. Over twenty thousand of the inhabitants, escaping death, were sold into slavery. The Romans also suffered naval defeat in 912. The Bulgarians in 893 had forced a shameful peace on Leo.[a]

The name of Leo VI has been dignified with the title of philosopher, and the union of the prince and the sage, of the active and speculative virtues, would indeed constitute the perfection of human nature. But the claims of Leo are far short of this ideal excellence.

If we still inquire the reason of his sage appellation, it can only be replied that the son of Basil was less ignorant than the greater part of his contemporaries in church and state; that his education had been directed by the learned Photius; and that several books of profane and ecclesiastical science were composed by the pen, or in the name, of the imperial philosopher. But the reputation of his philosophy and religion was overthrown by a domestic vice, the repetition of his nuptials.

In the beginning of his reign Leo himself had abolished the state of concubines, and condemned, without annulling, third marriages; but his patriotism and love soon compelled him to violate his own laws and to incur the penance which in a similar case he had imposed on his subjects. In his first three alliances, his nuptial bed was unfruitful; the emperor required a female companion and the empire a legitimate heir. The beautiful Zoe was introduced into the palace as a concubine; and after a trial of her fecundity and the birth of Constantine, her lover declared his intention of legitimating the mother and the child by the celebration of his fourth nuptials. But the patriarch Nicholas refused his blessing; the imperial baptism of the young prince was obtained by a promise of separation, and the contumacious husband of Zoe was excluded from the communion of the faithful. Neither the fear of exile, nor the desertion of his brethren, nor the authority of the Latin church, nor the danger of failure or doubt in the succession to the empire, could bend the spirit of the inflexible monk. After the death of Leo, he was recalled from exile to the civil and ecclesiastical administration; and the edict of union which was promulgated in the name of Constantine condemned the future scandal of fourth marriages, and left a tacit imputation on his own birth.

## CONSTANTINE VII PORPHYROGENITUS (911-919 A.D.) (944-959 A.D.)

In the Greek language purple and porphyry are the same word; and as the colours of nature are invariable, we may learn that a dark deep red was the Tyrian dye which stained the purple of the ancients. An apartment of the Byzantine palace was lined with porphyry; it was reserved for the use of the pregnant empresses; and the royal birth of their children was expressed by the appellation of porphyrogenite, or born in the purple. Several of the Roman princes had been blessed with an heir; but this peculiar surname was first applied to Constantine VII. His life and titular reign were

of equal duration; but of fifty-four years, six had elapsed before his father's death; and the son of Leo was ever the voluntary or reluctant subject of those who oppressed his weakness or abused his confidence. His uncle Alexander, who had long been invested with the title of Augustus, was the first colleague and governor of the young prince; but in a rapid career of vice and folly, the brother of Leo already emulated the reputation of Michael; and when he was extinguished by a timely death, he entertained a project of castrating his nephew, and leaving the empire to a worthless favourite.

### ROMANUS LECAPENUS (919-944 A.D.)

The succeeding years of the minority of Constantine were occupied by his mother Zoe, and a succession or council of seven regents,[1] who pursued their interest, gratified their passions, abandoned the republic, supplanted each other, and finally vanished in the presence of a soldier. From an obscure origin, Romanus Lecapenus had raised himself to the command of the naval armies; and in the anarchy of the times, had deserved, or at least had obtained, the national esteem. With a victorious and affectionate fleet,[2] he sailed from the mouth of the Danube into the harbour of Constantinople, and was hailed as the deliverer of the people, and the guardian of the prince. His supreme office was at first defined by the new appellation of father of the emperor; but Romanus soon disdained the subordinate powers of a minister, and assumed with the titles of Cæsar and Augustus the full independence of royalty, which he held near five-and-twenty years. His three sons, Christopher, Stephanus, and Constantine VIII, were adorned with the same honours, and the lawful emperor was degraded from the first to the fifth rank in this college of princes. Yet, in the preservation of his life and crown, he might still applaud his own fortune and the clemency of the usurper.

The examples of ancient and modern history would have excused the ambition of Romanus; the powers and the laws of the empire were in his hand; the spurious birth of Constantine would have justified his exclusion; and the grave or the monastery was open to receive the son of the concubine. But Lecapenus does not appear to have possessed either the virtues or the vices of a tyrant. The studious temper and retirement of Constantine disarmed the jealousy of power: his books and music, his pen and his pencil, were a constant source of amusement; and, if he could improve a scanty allowance by the sale of his pictures, if their price was not enhanced by the name of the artist, he was endowed with a personal talent, which few princes could employ in the hour of adversity.

The fall of Romanus was occasioned by his own vices and those of his children. After the decease of Christopher, his eldest son, the two surviving brothers quarrelled with each other, and conspired against their father. At the hour of noon, when all strangers were regularly excluded from the palace, they entered his apartment with an armed force, and conveyed him, in the habit of a monk, to a small island in the Propontis, which was peopled by a religious community. The rumour of this domestic revolution excited

[1 During the regency the Byzantines won a battle in Caria, and invaded Saracen territory with success.]

[2 According to Finlay,[a] Romanus had sailed away without a battle, after the land-forces had been crushingly defeated by the Bulgarian king, Simeon, at Achelous, 917. In 921, and again in 923, Simeon penetrated to the walls of Constantinople. In 934 and in 943 the Hungarians had like success, being bought off on both occasions. In 963, however, they were defeated. The Italian provinces underwent similar vicissitudes.]

a tumult in the city; but Porphyrogenitus alone, the true and lawful emperor, was the object of the public care; and the sons of Lecapenus were taught, by tardy experience, that they had achieved a guilty and perilous enterprise for the benefit of their rival. Their sister Helena, the wife of Constantine, revealed, or supposed, their treacherous design of assassinating her husband at the royal banquet. His loyal adherents were alarmed; and the two usurpers were prevented, seized, degraded from the purple, and embarked for the same island and monastery where their father had been so lately confined. Old Romanus met them on the beach with a sarcastic smile, and, after a just reproach of their folly and ingratitude, presented his imperial colleagues with an equal share of his water and vegetable diet.

In the fortieth year of his reign, Constantine VII obtained the possession of the Eastern world, which he ruled, or seemed to rule, near fifteen years. But he was devoid of that energy of character which could emerge into a life of action and glory; and the studies which had amused and dignified his leisure were incompatible with the serious duties of a sovereign. The emperor neglected the practice to instruct his son Romanus in the theory of government; while he indulged the habits of intemperance and sloth, he dropped the reins of the administration into the hands of Helena his wife; and, in the shifting scene of her favour and caprice, each minister was regretted in the promotion of a more worthless successor. Yet the birth and misfortunes of Constantine had endeared him to the Greeks; they excused his failings; they respected his learning, his innocence and charity, his love of justice; and the ceremony of his funeral was mourned with the unfeigned tears of his subjects (959). The body, according to ancient custom, lay in state in the vestibule of the palace; and the civil and military officers, the patricians, the senate, and the clergy, approached in due order to adore and kiss the inanimate corpse of their sovereign. Before the procession moved towards the imperial sepulchre, a herald proclaimed this awful admonition: "Arise, O king of the world, and obey the summons of the King of kings!"

## ROMANUS II (959–963 A.D.)

The death of Constantine was imputed to poison; and his son Romanus, who derived that name from his maternal grandfather, ascended the throne of Constantinople. A prince, who, at the age of twenty, could be suspected of anticipating his inheritance, must have been already lost in the public esteem; yet Romanus was rather weak than wicked; and the largest share of the guilt was transferred to his wife, Theophano, a woman of base origin, masculine spirit, and flagitious manners. The sense of personal glory and public happiness, the true pleasures of royalty, were unknown to the son of Constantine; and while the two brothers, Nicephorus and Leo, triumphed over the Saracens, the hours which the emperor owed to his people were consumed in strenuous idleness.

In strength and beauty he was conspicuous above his equals; tall and straight as a young cypress, his complexion was fair and florid, his eyes sparkling, his shoulders broad, his nose long and aquiline. Yet even these perfections were insufficient to fix the love of Theophano; and, after a reign of four years, Theophano mingled for her husband the same deadly draught which she was thought to have composed for his father.

By his marriage with this impious woman, Romanus the Younger left two sons, Basil II and Constantine IX, and two daughters, Theophano and Anne.

[963–969 A.D.]

The elder sister was given to Otto II emperor of the West; the younger became the wife of Vladimir, grand duke and apostle of Russia, and, by the marriage of her granddaughter with Henry I, king of France, the blood of the Macedonians, and perhaps of the Arsacides, still flows in the veins of the Bourbon line.

After the death of her husband the empress aspired to reign in the name of her sons, the elder of whom was five, and the younger only two years of age; but she soon felt the instability of a throne which was supported by a female who could not be esteemed, and two infants who could not be feared. Theophano looked around for a protector, and threw herself into the arms of the bravest soldier; her heart was capacious; but the deformity of the new favourite rendered it more than probable that interest was the motive and excuse of her love.

## NICEPHORUS PHOCAS (963–969 A.D.)

Nicephorus Phocas united, in the popular opinion, the double merit of a hero and saint. In the former character, his qualifications were genuine and splendid: the descendant of a race illustrious by their military exploits, he had displayed in every station and in every province the courage of a soldier and the conduct of a chief; and Nicephorus was crowned with recent laurels, from the important conquest of the isle of Crete. His religion was of a more ambiguous cast; and his hair-cloth, his fasts, his pious idiom, and his wish to retire from the business of the world, were a convenient mask for his dark and dangerous ambition. Yet he imposed on a holy patriarch, by whose influence, and by a decree of the senate, he was entrusted, during the minority of the young princes, with the absolute and independent command of the oriental armies. As soon as he had secured the leaders and the troops, he boldly marched to Constantinople, trampled on his enemies, avowed his correspondence with the empress, and, without degrading her sons, assumed, with the title of Augustus, the pre-eminence of rank and the plenitude of power. But his marriage with Theophano was refused by the same patriarch who had placed the crown on his head; by his second nuptials he incurred a year of canonical penance; a bar of spiritual affinity was opposed to their celebration; and some evasion and perjury were required to silence the scruples of the clergy and people. The popularity of the emperor was lost in the purple; in a reign of six years he provoked the hatred of strangers and subjects, and the hypocrisy and avarice of the first Nicephorus were revived in his successor. In the use of his patrimony, the generous temper of Nicephorus had been proved, and the revenue was strictly applied to the service of the state; each spring the emperor marched in person against the Saracens, and every Roman might compute the employment of his taxes in triumphs, conquests, and the security of the Eastern barrier.*g*

## THE WARS OF NICEPHORUS

The darling object of Nicephorus was to break the power of the Saracens, and extend the frontiers of the empire in Syria and Mesopotamia. In the spring of 964, he assembled an army against Tarsus, which was the fortress that covered the Syrian frontier. Next year (965), Nicephorus again formed the siege of Tarsus with an army of forty thousand men. The place was inadequately supplied with provisions; and though the inhabitants were a

warlike race, who had long carried on incursions into the Byzantine territory, they were compelled to abandon their native city, and retire into Syria, carrying with them only their personal clothing. A rich cross, which the Saracens had taken when they destroyed the Byzantine army under Stypiotes in the year 877, was recovered and placed in the church of St. Sophia at Constantinople. The bronze gates of Tarsus and Mopsuestia, which were of rich workmanship, were also removed and placed by Nicephorus in the new citadel he had constructed to defend the palace. In the same year Cyprus was reconquered by an expedition under the command of the patrician Nicetas.

For two years the emperor was occupied at Constantinople by the civil administration of the empire, by a threatened invasion of the Hungarians, and by disputes with the king of Bulgaria; but in 968 he again resumed the command of the army in the East. Early in spring he marched past Antioch at the head of eighty thousand men, and without stopping to besiege that city, he rendered himself master of the fortified places in its neighbourhood, in order to cut it off from all relief from the caliph of Baghdad. He then pushed forward his conquests; Laodicea, Hierapolis, Aleppo, Arca, and Emesa were taken, and Tripolis and Damascus paid tribute to save their territory from being laid waste. In this campaign many relics were surrendered by the Mohammedans. In consequence of the approach of winter, the emperor led his army into winter quarters, and deferred forming the siege of Antioch until the ensuing spring. He left the patrician Burtzes in a fort on the Black Mountain, with orders to watch the city and prevent the inhabitants from collecting provisions and military stores. The remainder of the army, under the command of Peter, was stationed in Cilicia. As he was anxious to reserve to himself the glory of restoring Antioch to the empire, he ordered his lieutenants not to attack the city during his absence. But one of the spies employed by Burtzes brought him the measure of the height of a tower which it was easy to approach, and the temptation to take the place by surprise was not to be resisted. Accordingly, on a dark winter night while there was a heavy fall of snow, Burtzes placed himself at the head of three hundred chosen men, and gained possession of two of the towers of Antioch. He immediately sent off a courier to Peter, requesting him to advance and take possession of the city; but Peter, from fear of the emperor's jealousy, delayed moving to the assistance of Burtzes for three days. During this interval, however, Burtzes defended himself against the repeated attacks of the whole population, though with great difficulty. The Byzantine army at length arrived, and Antioch was annexed to the empire after having remained 328 years in the power of the Saracens. The emperor Nicephorus, instead of rewarding Burtzes for his energy, dismissed both him and Peter from their commands.

The Fatimite caliph Moëz reigned at Kairowan, and was already contemplating the conquest of Egypt. Nicephorus not only refused to pay him the tribute of eleven thousand gold byzants, stipulated by Romanus I, but even sent an expedition to wrest Sicily from the Saracens. The chief command was entrusted to Nicetas, who had conquered Cyprus; and the army, consisting chiefly of cavalry, was more particularly placed under the orders of Manuel Phocas, the emperor's cousin, a daring officer. The troops were landed on the eastern coast, and Manuel rashly advanced, until he was surrounded by the enemy and slain. Nicetas also had made so little preparation to defend his position that his camp was stormed and he himself taken prisoner and sent to Africa.

[965-969 A.D.]

The affairs of Italy were, as usual, embroiled by local causes. Otto, the emperor of the West, appeared at the head of an army in Apulia, and having secured the assistance of Pandulf, prince of Beneventum, called Ironhead, carried on the war with frequent vicissitudes of fortune. Ironhead was taken prisoner by the Byzantine general, and sent captive to Constantinople. But the tyrannical conduct of the Byzantine officials lost all that was gained by the superior discipline of the troops, and favoured the progress of the German arms. Society had fallen into such a state of isolation that men were more eager to obtain immunity from all taxation than protection for industry and property, and the advantages of the Byzantine administration ceased to be appreciated.

The European provinces of the empire were threatened with invasion both by the Hungarians and Bulgarians. In 966 Nicephorus was apprised of the intention of the Hungarians, and he solicited the assistance of Peter, king of Bulgaria, to prevent their passing the Danube. Peter refused, for he had been compelled to conclude a treaty of peace with the Hungarians, who had invaded Bulgaria a short time before. It is even said that Peter took advantage of the difficulty in which Nicephorus appeared to be placed, by the numerous wars that occupied his troops, to demand payment of the tribute Romanus I had promised to Simeon. Nicephorus, in order to punish the insolence of one whom he regarded as his inferior, sent Calocyres, the son of the governor of Cherson, as ambassador to Russia, to invite Sviatoslaff, the Varangian prince of Kieff, to invade Bulgaria, and entrusted him with a sum of fifteen hundred pounds' weight of gold, to pay the expenses of the expedition. Calocyres proved a traitor: he formed an alliance with Sviatoslaff, proclaimed himself emperor, and involved the empire in a bloody war with the Russians.

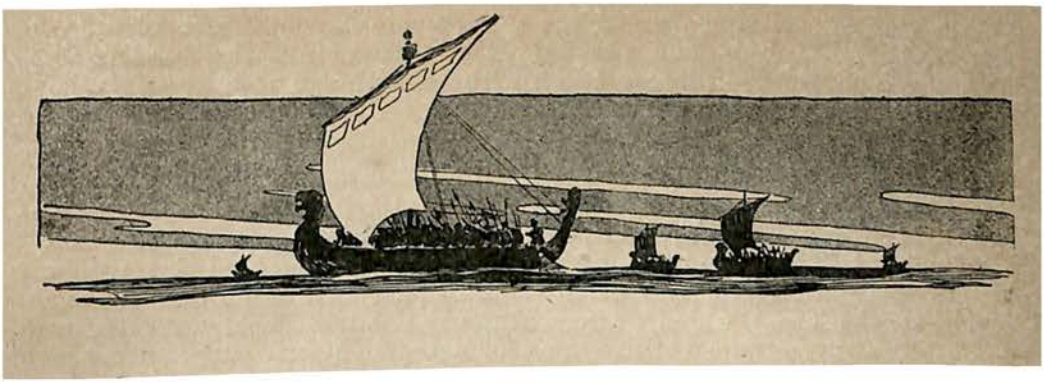
With all his defects, Nicephorus was one of the most virtuous men and conscientious sovereigns that ever occupied the throne of Constantinople. Though born of one of the noblest and wealthiest families of the Eastern Empire, and sure of obtaining the highest offices at a proud and luxurious court, he chose a life of hardship in pursuit of military glory; and a contemporary historian, Leo Diaconus,[o] who wrote after his family had been ruined by proscription and his name had become odious, observes, that no one had ever seen him indulge in revelry or debauchery even in his youth.[n]

Among the warriors who promoted his elevation, and served under his standard, a noble and valiant Armenian had deserved and obtained the most eminent rewards. The stature of Joannes Zimisces was below the ordinary standard; but this diminutive body was endowed with strength, beauty, and the soul of a hero. By the jealousy of the emperor's brother, he was degraded from the office of general of the East, to that of director of the posts, and his murmurs were chastised with disgrace and exile. But Zimisces was ranked among the numerous lovers of the empress. On her intercession he was permitted to reside at Chalcedon, in the neighbourhood of the capital; her bounty was repaid in his clandestine and amorous visits to the palace; and Theophano consented with alacrity to the death of an ugly and penurious husband. Some bold and trusty conspirators were concealed in her most private chambers; in the darkness of a winter night Zimisces, with his principal companions, embarked in a small boat, traversed the Bosporus, landed at the palace stairs, and silently ascended a ladder of ropes, which was cast down by the female attendants. Neither his own suspicions, nor the warnings of his friends, nor the tardy aid of his brother Leo, nor the fortress which he had erected in the palace, could protect Nicephorus from a domestic

foe, at whose voice every door was opened to the assassins. As he slept on a bearskin on the ground, he was roused by their noisy intrusion, and thirty daggers glittered before his eyes.

It is doubtful whether Zimisces imbrued his hands in the blood of his sovereign; but he enjoyed the inhuman spectacle of revenge. The murder was protracted by insult and cruelty; and as soon as the head of Nicephorus was shown from the window, the tumult was hushed, and the Armenian was emperor of the East. On the day of his coronation, he was stopped on the threshold of St. Sophia by the intrepid patriarch; who charged his conscience with the deed of treason and blood; and required, as a sign of repentance, that he should separate himself from his more criminal associate. This sally of apostolical zeal was not offensive to the prince, since he could neither love nor trust a woman who had repeatedly violated the most sacred obligations; and Theophano, instead of sharing his imperial fortune, was dismissed with ignominy from his bed and palace.

In their last interview, she displayed a frantic and impotent rage; accused the ingratitude of her lover; assaulted with words and blows her son Basil, as he stood silent and submissive in the presence of a superior colleague; and avowed her own prostitution in proclaiming the illegitimacy of his birth. The public indignation was appeased by her exile and the punishment of the meaner accomplices; the death of an unpopular prince was forgiven; and the guilt of Zimisces was forgotten in the splendour of his virtues. Perhaps his profusion was less useful to the state than the avarice of Nicephorus; but his gentle and generous behaviour delighted all who approached his person; and it was only in the paths of victory that he trod in the footsteps of his predecessor. The greatest part of his reign was employed in the camp and the field. His personal valour and activity were signalised on the Danube and the Tigris, the ancient boundaries of the Roman world; and by his double triumph over the Russians and the Saracens, he deserved the titles of saviour of the empire and conqueror of the East.[g]



## CHAPTER VIII

## GLORY AND DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE

[969–1204 A.D.]

THE Russian war was the great event of the reign of Joannes Zimisces. The military fame of the Byzantine emperor, who was unquestionably the ablest general of his time, the greatness of the Russian nation, whose power now overshadows Europe, the scene of the contest, destined in our day to be again the battle-field of Russian armies, and the political interest which attaches to the first attempt of a Russian prince to march by land to Constantinople, all combine to give a practical as well as a romantic interest to this war.

The first Russian naval expedition against Constantinople in 865 would probably have been followed by a series of plundering excursions, like those carried on by the Danes and Normans on the coasts of England and France, had not the Turkish tribe called the Patzinaks rendered themselves masters of the lower course of the Dnieper, and become instruments in the hands of the emperors to arrest the activity of the bold Varangians. The northern rulers of Kieff were the same rude warriors that infested England and France, but the Russian people was then in a more advanced state of society than the mass of the population in Britain and Gaul. The majority of the Russians were freemen; the majority of the inhabitants of Britain and Gaul were serfs.

After the defeat in 865, the Russians induced their rulers to send envoys to Constantinople to renew commercial intercourse, and invite Christian missionaries to visit their country; and no inconsiderable portion of the people embraced Christianity, though the Christian religion continued long after better known to the Russian merchants than to the Varangian warriors. The commercial relations of the Russians with Cherson and Constantinople were now carried on directly, and numbers of Russian traders took up their residence in these cities. The first commercial treaty between the Russians of Kieff and the Byzantine Empire was concluded in the reign of Basil I. The intercourse increased from that time. In the year 902, seven hundred Russians are mentioned as serving on board the Byzantine fleet with high pay; in 935, seven Russian vessels, with 415 men, formed part of a Byzantine expedition to Italy; and in 949, six Russian vessels, with 629 men, were engaged in the unsuccessful expedition of Gongyles against Crete. In 966,

a corps of Russians accompanied the unfortunate expedition of Nicetas to Sicily. There can be no doubt that these were all Varangians, familiar, like the Danes and Normans in the West, with the dangers of the sea, and not native Russians, whose services on board the fleet could have been of little value to the masters of Greece.

But to return to the history of the Byzantine wars with the Russians. In the year 907, Oleg, who was regent of Kieff during the minority of Igor the son of Ruric, assembled an army of Varangians, Slavonians, and Croatians, and, collecting two thousand vessels or boats of the kind then used on the northern shore of the Euxine, advanced to attack Constantinople. The exploits of this army, which pretended to aspire at the conquest of Tzaragrad, or the City of the Cæsars, were confined to plundering the country round Constantinople; and it is not improbable that the expedition was undertaken to obtain indemnity for some commercial losses sustained by imperial negligence, monopoly, or oppression. The subjects of the emperor were murdered, and the Russians amused themselves with torturing their captives in the most barbarous manner. At length Leo purchased their retreat by the payment of a large sum of money. Such is the account transmitted to us by the Russian monk Nestor, for no Byzantine writer notices the expedition, which was doubtless nothing more than a plundering incursion, in which the city of Constantinople was not exposed to any danger. These hostilities were terminated by a commercial treaty in 912, and its conditions are recorded in detail by Nestor.

In the year 941, Igor made an attack on Constantinople, impelled either by the spirit of adventure, which was the charm of existence among all the tribes of Northmen, or else roused to revenge by some violation of the treaty of 912. The Russian flotilla, consisting of innumerable small vessels, made its appearance in the Bosporus while the Byzantine fleet was absent in the Archipelago. Igor landed at different places on the coast of Thrace and Bithynia, ravaging and plundering the country; the inhabitants were treated with incredible cruelty; some were crucified, others were burned alive, the Greek priests were killed by driving nails into their heads, and the churches were destroyed. Only fifteen ships remained at Constantinople, but these were soon fitted up with additional tubes for shooting Greek fire. This force, trifling as it was in number, gave the Byzantines an immediate superiority at sea, and the patrician Theophanes sailed out of the port to attack the Russians. Igor, seeing the small number of the enemy's ships, surrounded them on all sides, and endeavoured to carry them by boarding; but the Greek fire became only so much more available against boats and men crowded together, and the attack was repulsed with fearful loss. In the meantime, some of the Russians who landed in Bithynia were defeated by Bardas Phocas and Joannes Curcuas, and those who escaped from the naval defeat were pursued and slaughtered on the coast of Thrace without mercy. The emperor Romanus ordered all the prisoners brought to Constantinople to be beheaded. Theophanes overtook the fugitive ships in the month of September, and the relics of the expedition were destroyed, Igor effecting his escape with only a few boats. The Russian chronicle of Nestor says that, in the year 944, Igor, assisted by other Varangians, and by the Patzinaks, prepared a second expedition, but that the inhabitants of Cherson so alarmed the emperor Romanus by their reports of its magnitude, that he sent ambassadors, who met Igor at the mouth of the Danube, and sued for peace on terms to which Igor and his boyards consented. This is probably merely a salve applied to the vanity of the people of Kieff by their chronicler; but it

is certain that a treaty of peace was concluded between the emperors of Constantinople and the princes of Kieff in the year 945.

The cruelty of the Varangian prince Igor, after his return to Russia, caused him to be murdered by his rebellious subjects.[1] Olga, his widow, became regent for their son Sviatoslaff. She embraced the Christian religion, and visited Constantinople in 957, where she was baptized. The emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus has left us an account of the ceremony of her reception at the Byzantine court. A Russian monk has preserved the commercial treaties of the empire; a Byzantine emperor records the pageantry that amused a Russian princess. The high position occupied by the court of Kieff in the tenth century is also attested by the style with which it was addressed by the court of Constantinople. The golden bulls of the Roman emperor of the East, addressed to the prince of Russia, were ornamented with a pendent seal equal in size to a double solidus, like those addressed to the kings of France.

## THE RUSSIAN WAR (970-971 A.D.)

We have seen that the emperor Nicephorus II sent the patrician Calocyres to excite Sviatoslaff to invade Bulgaria, and that the Byzantine ambassador proved a traitor, and assumed the purple. Sviatoslaff soon invaded Bulgaria at the head of a powerful army, which the gold brought by Calocyres assisted him to equip, and defeated the Bulgarian army in a great battle, 968 A.D. Peter, king of Bulgaria, died shortly after, and the country was involved in civil broils; taking advantage of which, Sviatoslaff took Presthlava the capital, and rendered himself master of the whole kingdom.

Nicephorus now formed an alliance with the Bulgarians, and was preparing to defend them against the Russians, when Sviatoslaff was compelled to return home, in order to defend his capital against the Patzinaks. Nicephorus assisted Boris and Romanus, the sons of Peter, to recover Bulgaria, and concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with Boris, who occupied the throne. After the assassination of Nicephorus, Sviatoslaff returned to invade Bulgaria with an army of sixty thousand men, and his enterprise assumed the character of one of those great invasions which had torn whole provinces from the Western Empire. His army was increased by a treaty with the Patzinaks and an alliance with the Hungarians, so that they began to dream of the conquest of Constantinople, and hoped to transfer the empire of the East from the Romans of Byzantium to the Russians. It was fortunate for the Byzantine Empire that it was ruled by a soldier who knew how to profit by its superiority in tactics and discipline. The Russian was not ignorant of strategy, and having secured his flank by his alliance with the Hungarians, he entered Thrace by the western passes of Mount Hæmus, then the most frequented road between Germany and Constantinople, and that by which the Hungarians were in the habit of making their plundering incursions into the empire.

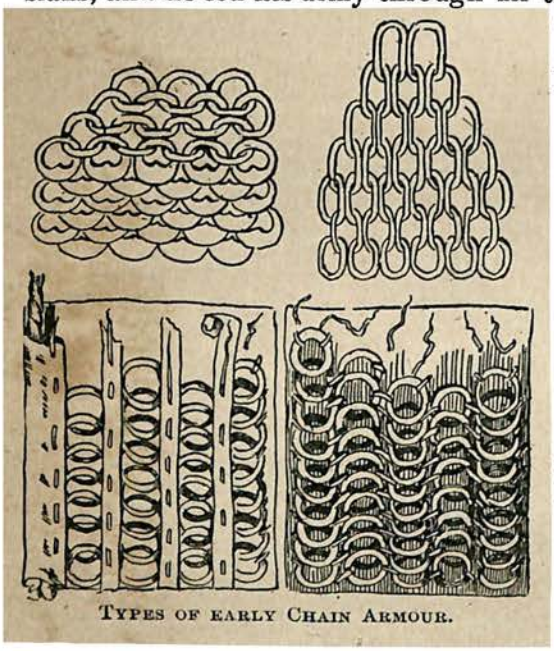
Joannes Zimisces was occupied in the East when Sviatoslaff completed the second conquest of Bulgaria and passed Mount Hæmus, expecting to subdue Thrace during the emperor's absence with equal ease, 970 A.D. The empire was still suffering from famine. Sviatoslaff took Philippopolis, and murdered twenty thousand of the inhabitants. An embassy sent by Zimisces was dismissed with a demand of tribute, and the Russian army advanced to

[1] Leo Diaconus[b] calls his murderers Germans, meaning doubtless Northmen.

Arcadiopolis, where one division was defeated by Bardas Sclerus, and the remainder retired again behind Mount Hæmus.

In the following spring, 971, the emperor Joannes took the field at the head of an army of fifteen thousand infantry and thirteen thousand cavalry, besides a body-guard of chosen troops called the Immortals, and a powerful battery of field and siege engines.[1] A fleet of three hundred galleys, attended by many smaller vessels, was despatched to enter the Danube and cut off the communications of the Russians with their own country.[2]

The emperor Joannes marched from Hadrianopolis just before Easter, when it was not expected that a Byzantine emperor would take the field. He knew that the passes on the great eastern road had been left unguarded by the Russians, and he led his army through all the defiles of Mount Hæmus without encountering any difficulty. The Russian troops stationed at Presthlava, who ought to have guarded the passes, marched out to meet the emperor when they heard he had entered Bulgaria. Their whole army consisted of infantry, but the soldiers were covered with chain armour, and accustomed to resist the light cavalry of the Patzinaks and other Turkish tribes.[3] They proved, however, no match for the heavy-armed lancers of the imperial army; and, after a vigorous resistance, were completely routed by Joannes Zimisces, leaving eighty-five hundred men on the field of battle. On the following day Presthlava was taken by escalade, and a body of seven thousand Russians and Bulgarians, who attempted to defend the royal palace, which was fortified as a citadel, were put to the sword after a gallant defence. Sphengelos, who commanded this division of the Russian force, and the traitor Calocyres, succeeded in escaping to Dorystolon, where Sviatoslaff had concentrated the rest of the army; but Boris, king of Bulgaria, with all his family, was taken prisoner in his capital.



TYPES OF EARLY CHAIN ARMOUR.

The emperor, after celebrating Easter in Presthlava, advanced by Pliscova and Dinea to Dorystolon, where Sviatoslaff still hoped for victory, though his position was becoming daily more dangerous. The Byzantine fleet entered the Danube and took up its station opposite the city, cutting off all the communications of the Russians by water, at the same time that the emperor encamped before the walls and blockaded them by land. Zimisces, knowing he had to deal with a desperate enemy, fortified his camp with

[1] These numbers are given by Leo Diaconus.[b] Cedrenus[c] gives five thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry; Zonaras,[d] the same number. The proportion affords some insight into the constitution of Byzantine armies at this period of military glory. The cavalry served as the model for European chivalry, but the sword of the legionary could still gain a battle.

[2] Leo Diaconus[b] calls the larger vessels triremes, though they certainly had not more than two tiers of oars.

[3] The Russians then wore armour similar to that worn by the Normans in western Europe at a later period, according to Leo Diaconus.[b]

[971 A.D.]

a ditch and rampart according to the old Roman model, which was traditionally preserved by the Byzantine engineers. The Russians enclosed within the walls of Dorystolon were more numerous than their besiegers, and Sviatoslaff hoped to be able to open his communications with the surrounding country, by bringing on a general engagement in the plain before all the defences of the enemy's camp were completed. He expected to defeat the attacks of the Byzantine cavalry by forming his men in squares, and, as the Russian soldiers were covered by long shields that reached to their feet, he expected to be able, by advancing his squares like moving towers, to clear the plain of the enemy. But while the Byzantine legions met the Russians in front, the heavy-armed cavalry assailed them with their long spears in flank, and the archers and slingers under cover watched coolly to transfix every man where an opening allowed their missiles to penetrate. The battle nevertheless lasted all day, but in the evening the Russians were compelled, in spite of their desperate valour, to retire into Dorystolon without having effected anything.

The infantry of the north now began to feel its inferiority to the veteran cavalry of Asia sheathed in plate armour, and disciplined by long campaigns against the Saracens. Sviatoslaff, however, continued to defend himself by a series of battles rather than sorties, in which he made desperate efforts to break through the ranks of the besiegers in vain, until at length it became evident that he must either conclude peace, die on the field of battle, or be starved to death in Dorystolon. Before resigning himself to his fate, he made a last effort to cut his way through the Byzantine army; and on this occasion the Russians fought with such desperation that contemporaries ascribed the victory of the Byzantine troops, not to the superior tactics of the emperor, nor to the discipline of a veteran army, but to the personal assistance of St. Theodore, who found it necessary to lead the charge of the Roman lancers, and shiver a spear with the Russians himself, before their phalanx could be broken. The victory was complete, and Sviatoslaff sent ambassadors to the emperor to offer terms of peace.

The siege of Dorystolon had now lasted more than two months, and the Russian army, though reduced by repeated losses, still amounted to twenty-two thousand men. The valour and contempt of death which the Varangians had displayed in the contest, convinced the emperor that it would cause the loss of many brave veterans to insist on their laying down their arms; he was therefore willing to come to terms, and peace was concluded on condition that Sviatoslaff should yield up Dorystolon, with all the plunder, slaves, and prisoners in possession of the Russians, and engage to swear perpetual amity with the empire, and never to invade either the territory of Cherson or the kingdom of Bulgaria; while, on the other hand, the emperor Joannes engaged to allow the Russians to descend the Danube in their boats, to supply them with two medimni of wheat for each surviving soldier to enable them to return home without dispersing to plunder for their subsistence, and to renew the old commercial treaties between Kieff and Constantinople, July, 971.

After the treaty was concluded, Sviatoslaff desired to have a personal interview with his conqueror. Joannes rode down to the bank of the Danube clad in splendid armour, and accompanied by a brilliant suite of guards on horseback. The short figure of the emperor was no disadvantage where he was distinguished by the beauty of his charger and the splendour of his arms, while his fair countenance, light hair, and piercing blue eyes fixed the attention of all on his bold and good-humoured face, which contrasted well with the dark, sombre visages of his attendants. Sviatoslaff

arrived by water in a boat, which he steered himself by an oar. His dress was white, differing in no way from that of those under him, except in being cleaner. Sitting in the stern of his boat, he conversed for a short time with the emperor, who remained on horseback close to the beach. The appearance of the bold Varangian excited much curiosity, and is thus described by a historian who was intimate with many of those who were present at the interview: The Russian was of the middle stature, well formed, with strong neck and broad chest. His eyes were blue, his eyebrows thick, his nose flat, and his beard shaved, but his upper lip was shaded with long and thick mustaches. The hair of his head was cropped close, except two long locks which hung down on each side of his face, and were thus worn as a mark of his Scandinavian race. In his ears he wore golden earrings.

Sviatoslaff immediately quitted Dorystolon, but he was obliged to winter on the shores of the Euxine, and famine thinned his ranks. In spring he attempted to force his way through the territory of the Patzinaks with his diminished army. He was defeated, and perished near the cataracts of the Dnieper. Kour, prince of the Patzinaks, became the possessor of his skull, which he shaped into a drinking-cup, and adorned with the moral maxim, doubtless not less suitable to his own skull, had it fallen into the hands of others, "He who covets the property of others, oft loses his own." We have already had occasion to record that the skull of the Byzantine emperor, Nicephorus I, had ornamented the festivals of a Bulgarian king; that of a Russian sovereign now figured in the tents of a Turkish tribe.

The results of the campaign were as advantageous to the Byzantine Empire as they were glorious to the emperor Joannes. Bulgaria was conquered, a strong garrison established in Dorystolon, and the Danube once more became the frontier of the Roman Empire. The peace with the Russians was uninterrupted until about the year 988, when, from some unknown cause of quarrel, Vladimir the son of Sviatoslaff attacked and gained possession of Cherson by cutting off the water.

The Greek city of Cherson, situated on the extreme verge of ancient civilisation, escaped for ages from the impoverishment and demoralisation into which the Hellenic race was precipitated by the Roman system of concentrating all power in the capital of the empire. Cherson was governed for centuries by its own elective magistrates, and it was not until towards the middle of the ninth century that the emperor Theophilus destroyed its independence. When Vladimir the sovereign of Russia attacked it in 988, it was betrayed into his hands by a priest, who informed him how to cut off the water. The great object of ambition of all the princes of the East, from the time of Heraclius to that of the last Comnenus of Trebizond, was to form matrimonial alliances with the imperial family. Vladimir obtained the hand of Anne, the sister of the emperors Basil II and Constantine IX, and was baptized and married in the church of the Panaghia at Cherson. To soothe the vanity of the empire, he pretended to retain possession of his conquest as the dowry of his wife. Many of the priests who converted the Russians to Christianity, and many of the artists who adorned the earliest Russian churches with paintings and mosaics, were natives of Cherson. The church raised Vladimir to the rank of a saint; the Russians conferred on him the title of "the great."

Joannes Zimisces, having terminated the Russian War, compelled Boris to resign the crown of Bulgaria, and accept the title of "magister," as a pensioner of the Byzantine court. The frontier of the Eastern Empire was once more extended to the Danube.

### WAR WITH THE SARACENS (972-976 A.D.)

The Saracen War had been carried on vigorously on the frontiers of Syria, while the emperor Joannes was occupied with the Russian campaign. The continued successes of the Byzantine arms had so alarmed the Mohammedan princes, that an extensive confederacy was formed to recover Antioch, and the command of the army of the caliph was entrusted to Zoher, the lieutenant of the Fatimites in Egypt. The imperial army was led by the patrician Nicolaus, a man of great military skill, who had been a eunuch in the household of Joannes Zimisces; and he defeated the Saracens in a pitched battle, and saved Antioch for a time. But in the following year (973) the conquest of Nisibis filled the city of Baghdad with such consternation, that a levy of all Mussulmans was ordered to march against the Christians. The Byzantine troops in Mesopotamia were commanded by an Armenian named Temelek Melchi, who was completely routed near Amida. He was himself taken prisoner, and died after a year's confinement.

With all his talents as a general, Joannes does not appear to have possessed the same control over the general administration as Nicephorus; and many of the cities conquered by his predecessor, in which the majority of the inhabitants were Mohammedans, succeeded in throwing off the Byzantine yoke. Even Antioch declared itself independent. A great effort became necessary to regain the ground that had been lost; and, to make this, Joannes Zimisces took the command of the Byzantine army in person in the year 974. He marched in one campaign from Mount Taurus to the banks of the Tigris, and from the banks of the Tigris back into Syria, as far as Mount Lebanon, carrying his victorious arms, according to the vaunting inaccuracy of the Byzantine geographical nomenclature, into Palestine. His last campaign, in the following year, was the most brilliant of his exploits. In Mesopotamia he regained possession of Amida and Martyropolis; but these cities contained so few Christian inhabitants that he was obliged to leave the administration in the hands of Saracen emirs, who were charged with the collection of the tribute and taxes. Nisibis he found deserted, and from it he marched by Edessa to Hierapolis or Membig, where he captured many valuable relics, among which the shoes of Jesus, and the hair of John the Baptist, are especially enumerated. From Hierapolis Joannes marched to Apamea, Emesa, and Baalbec, without meeting any serious opposition. The emir of Damascus sent valuable presents, and agreed to pay an annual tribute to escape a visit.

The emperor then crossed Mount Lebanon, storming the fortress of Borzo, which commanded the pass, and, descending to the sea-coast, laid siege to Berytus, which soon surrendered, and in which he found an image of the crucifixion that he deemed worthy of being sent to Constantinople. From Berytus he marched northward to Tripolis, which he besieged in vain for forty days. The valour of the garrison and the strength of the fortifications compelled him to raise the siege; but his retreat was ascribed to fear of a comet, which illuminated the sky with a strange brilliancy. As it was now September, he wished to place his worn-out troops in winter quarters in Antioch; but the inhabitants shut the gates against him. To punish them for their revolt, he had the folly to ravage their territory, and cut down their fruit trees; forgetting, in his barbarous and impolitic revenge, that he was ruining his own empire. Burtzes was left to reconquer Antioch for the second time; which, however, he did not effect until after the death of the emperor Joannes.

The army was then placed in winter quarters on the frontiers of Cilicia, and the emperor hastened to return to Constantinople. On the journey, as he passed the fertile plains of Longias and Dryze, in the vicinity of Anazarba and Podandus, he saw them covered with flocks and herds, with well-fortified farmyards, but no smiling villages. He inquired with wonder to whom the country belonged, in which pasturage was conducted on so grand a scale; and he learned that the greater part of the province had been acquired by the president Basilios in donations from himself and his predecessor, Nicephorus. Amazed at the enormous accumulation of property in the hands of one individual, he exclaimed, "Alas! the wealth of the empire is wasted, the strength of the armies is exhausted, and the Roman emperors toil like mercenaries, to add to the riches of an insatiable eunuch!" This speech was reported to the president. He considered that he had raised both Nicephorus and Joannes to the throne; his interest now required that it should return to its rightful master, and that the young Basil should enjoy his heritage. The emperor Joannes stopped on his way to Constantinople at the palace of Romanus, a grandson of Romanus I; and it is said he there drank of a poisoned cup presented to him by a servant gained by the president. Certain it is that Joannes Zimisces reached the capital in a dying state, and expired on the 10th of January, 976, at the age of fifty-one.[e]

## THE APEX OF GLORY

"The period of greatest Byzantine power," says Gelzer,[f] "is reached in the reigns of Nicephorus II (963–969), Joannes Zimisces (969–976), and Basil Bulgaroctonus (976–1025)." Finlay[e] also calls it the "Period of Conquest and Military Glory." That the glory was understood at the time is evident from the enthusiastic outbursts of the anonymous continuator of Georgius Monachus.[g] Of Nicephorus Phocas he says, "Then Phocas flashed like lightning and stormed against the enemies of the Romans. He ravaged, burned, and led into captivity the cities and lands of the barbarians. Myriads of foreign lands he smote, and broadened the realm and the might of the Romans. The Arabs trembled, the Armenians and Syrians shook, the Saracens were scared and the Turks took flight; and the Romans seized their strongholds and provinces, and Phocas' name was fearful to all." Of Zimisces the same chronicler is equally enthusiastic: "And the nations were in great fright before Zimisces' fury. And he spread the realm of the Romans abroad; the Saracens and Armenians fled; the Persians shook and from all sides brought him gifts; they begged him for mercy and peace. He led even to Edessa and to the river Euphrates; and the earth was full of the tents of the Romans. Syrians and Phœnicians were trampled by the Roman steeds. He fetched home mighty victories, and the sword of Christ mowed like a scythe."

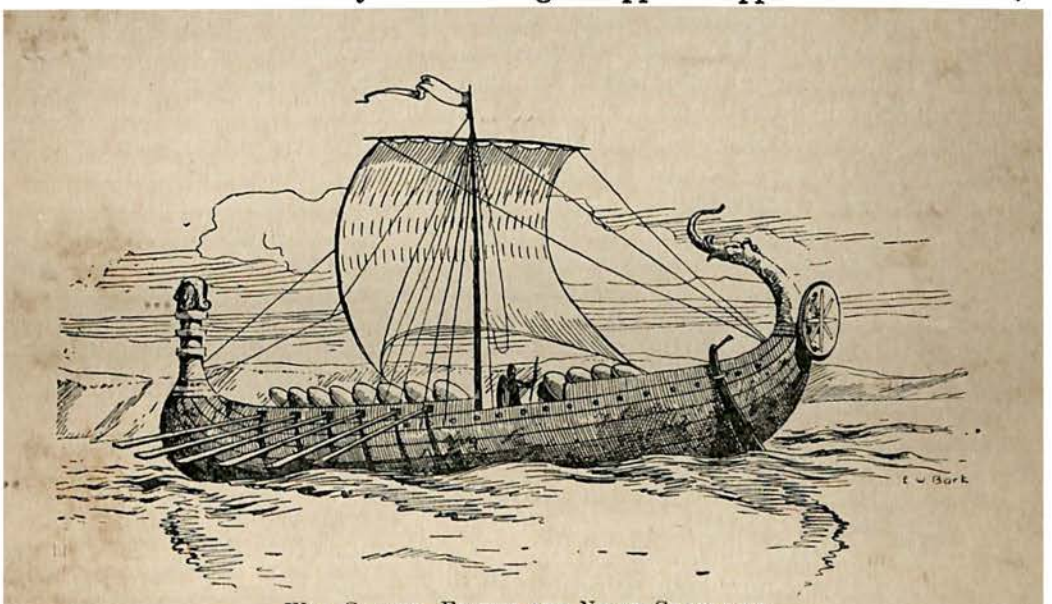
And yet in Zimisces, Gelzer sees a retrogression of empire and an expansion of feudalism; more and more he sees that the old Roman military and civil state takes on a military and aristocratic physiognomy. After his death the movement continued with usury.[a]

The premature death of Zimisces was a loss, rather than a benefit, to the sons of Romanus II. Their want of experience detained them twelve years longer the obscure and voluntary pupils of a minister, who extended his reign by persuading them to indulge the pleasures of youth, and to disdain the labours of government. In this silken web, the weakness of

[976 A.D.]

Constantine was forever entangled; but his elder brother felt the impulse of genius and the desire of action; he frowned, and the minister was no more. Basil was the acknowledged sovereign of Constantinople and the provinces of Europe; but Asia was oppressed by two veteran generals, Phocas and Sclerus, who, alternately friends and enemies, subjects and rebels, maintained their independence, and laboured to emulate the example of successful usurpation.

Against these domestic enemies, the son of Romanus first drew his sword, and they trembled in the presence of a lawful and high-spirited prince. The first, in the front of battle, was thrown from his horse by the stroke of poison, or an arrow; the second, who had been twice loaded with chains, and twice invested with the purple, was desirous of ending in peace the small remainder of his days. As the aged suppliant approached the throne,



WAR GALLEY, EIGHTH AND NINTH CENTURIES

with dim eyes and faltering steps, leaning on his two attendants, the emperor exclaimed, in the insolence of youth and power: "And is this the man who has so long been the object of our terror?" After he had confirmed his own authority and the peace of the empire, the trophies of Nicephorus and Zimisces would not suffer their royal pupil to sleep in the palace. His long and frequent expeditions against the Saracens were rather glorious than useful to the empire; but the final destruction of the kingdom of Bulgaria appears, since the time of Belisarius, the most important triumph of the Roman arms.[h]

## BASIL II AND HIS SUCCESSORS (976–1054 A.D.)

The reign of Basil II is the culminating point of Byzantine greatness. The eagles of Constantinople flew during his life, in a long career of victory, from the banks of the Danube to those of the Euphrates, and from the mountains of Armenia to the shores of Italy. Basil's indomitable courage, terrific

cruelty, indifference to art and literature, and religious superstition, all combine to render him a true type of his empire and age. The great object of his policy was to consolidate the unity of the administration in Europe by the complete subjection of the Bulgarians and Slavonians, whom similarity of language had almost blended into one nation, and had completely united in hostility to the imperial government.

Four sons of a Bulgarian noble of the highest rank had commenced a revolutionary movement in Bulgaria against the royal family, after the death of Peter and the first victories of the Russians. In order to put an end to these troubles, Nicephorus II had, on the retreat of Sviatoslaff, replaced Boris, the son of Peter, on the throne of Bulgaria; and when the Russians returned, Boris submitted to their domination. Shortly after the death of Joannes I (Zimisces), the Bulgarian leaders again roused the people to a struggle for independence. Boris, who escaped from Constantinople to attempt recovering his paternal throne, was accidentally slain, and the four brothers again became the chiefs of the nation. In a short time three perished, and Samuel, who alone remained, assumed the title of king. The forces of the empire were occupied with the rebellion of Sclerus, so that the vigour and military talents of Samuel succeeded both in expelling the Byzantine authorities from Bulgaria, and in rousing the Slavonians of Macedonia to throw off the Byzantine yoke. Samuel then invaded Thessaly, and extended his plundering excursions over those parts of Greece and the Peloponnesus still inhabited by the Hellenic race. He carried away the inhabitants of Larissa in order to people the town of Prespa, which he then proposed to make his capital, with intelligent artisans and manufacturers; and, in order to attach them to their new residence by ties of old superstition, he removed to Prespa the body of their protecting martyr, St. Achilles, who some pretended had been a Roman soldier, and others a Greek archbishop. Samuel showed himself, both in ability and courage, a rival worthy of Basil; and the empire of the East seemed for some time in danger of being transferred from the Byzantine Romans to the Slavonian Bulgarians.

In the year 981, the emperor Basil made his first campaign against the new Bulgarian monarchy in person. His plan of operations was to secure the great western passes through Mount Hæmus, on the road from Philippopolis to Sardica, and by the conquest of the latter city he hoped to cut off the communication between the Bulgarians north of Mount Hæmus and the Slavonians in Macedonia. But his military inexperience, and the relaxed discipline of the army, caused this well-conceived plan to fail. Sardica was besieged in vain for twenty days. The negligence of the officers and the disobedience of the soldiers caused several foraging parties to be cut off; the besieged burned the engines of the besiegers in a victorious sortie, and the emperor felt the necessity of commencing his retreat. As his army was passing the defiles of Hæmus, it was assailed by the troops Samuel had collected to watch his operations, and completely routed. The baggage and military chest, the emperor's plate and tents, all fell into the hands of the Bulgarian king, and Basil himself escaped with some difficulty to Philippopolis, where he collected the relics of the fugitives. Leo Diaconus,[b] the Byzantine historian, who accompanied the expedition as one of the clergy of the imperial chapel, and was fortunate enough to escape the pursuit, has left a short but authentic notice of this first disastrous campaign of Basil, the slayer of the Bulgarians, in his *Historia*.[1]

[1] Leo Diaconus,[b] 171.

[981–1001 A.D.]

The reorganisation of his army, the regulation of the internal administration of the empire, the rebellion of Phocas, and the wars in Italy and on the Asiatic frontier, prevented Basil from attacking Samuel in person for many years. Still a part of the imperial forces carried on this war, and Samuel soon perceived that he was unable to resist the Byzantine generals in the plains of Bulgaria, where the heavy cavalry, military engines, and superior discipline of the imperial armies could all be employed to advantage. He resolved, therefore, to transfer the seat of the Bulgarian government to a more inaccessible position, at Achrida. Here, therefore, Samuel established the capital of the Bulgaro-Slavonian kingdom he founded.

The dominions of Samuel soon became as extensive as the European portion of the dominions of Basil. The possessions of the two monarchs ran into one another in a very irregular form, and both were inhabited by a variety of races, in different states of civilisation, bound together by few sympathies, and no common attachment to national institutions. Samuel was master of almost the whole of ancient Bulgaria, the emperor retaining possession of little more than the fortress of Dorystolon, the forts at the mouth of the Danube, and the passes of Mount Hæmus. But the strength of the Bulgarian king lay in his possessions in the upper part of Macedonia, in Epirus, and the southern part of Illyricum, in the chain of Pindus, and in mountains that overlook the northern and western slopes of the great plains of Thessalonica and Thessaly. He was indefatigable in forming a large military force, and employing it constantly in ravaging the plain of Thessaly, and attacking the Greek cities.

In 996 he marched rapidly through Thessaly, Bœotia, and Attica, into the Peloponnesus; but the towns everywhere shut their gates, and prepared for a long defence, so that he could effect nothing beyond plundering and laying waste the open country. In the meantime, the emperor sent Nicephorus Uranus, with all the force he should be able to collect, in pursuit of Samuel. Uranus entered Thessaly, and pushed rapidly southward to the banks of the Sperchius, where he found Samuel encamped on the other side, hastening home with the plunder of Greece. In the night the people showed Uranus a ford, by which he passed the river and surprised the Bulgarians in their camp. Samuel and his son Gabriel escaped with the greatest difficulty. The Bulgarian army was completely annihilated, and all the plunder and slaves made during the expedition fell into the hands of Uranus, in the year 996 A.D. This great defeat paralysed the military operations of Samuel for some time.

Basil at length arranged the external relations of the empire in such a way that he was able to assemble a large army for the military operations against the kingdom of Achrida, which he determined to conduct in person. The Slavonians now formed the most numerous part of the population of the country between the Danube, the Ægean, and the Adriatic, and they were in possession of the line of mountains that runs from Dyrrhachium, in a variety of chains, to the vicinity of Constantinople. Basil saw many signs that the whole Slavonic race in these countries was united in opposition to the Byzantine government, so that the existence of his empire demanded the conquest of the Bulgaro-Slavonian kingdom which Samuel had founded. To this arduous task he devoted himself with his usual energy.

In the year 1000, his generals were ordered to enter Bulgaria by the eastern passes of Mount Hæmus; and in this campaign they took the cities of greater and lesser Presthlava and Pliscova, the ancient capitals of Bulgaria. In the following year, the emperor took upon himself the direction of

the army destined to act against Samuel. Fixing his headquarters at Thessalonica, he recovered possession of the fortresses of Vodena, Berœa, and Servia.

In the following campaign (1002), the emperor changed the field of operations, and, marching from Philippopolis through the western passes of Mount Hæmus, occupied the whole line of road as far as the Danube, and cut Samuel off from all communication with the plains of Bulgaria. Samuel formed a bold enterprise, which he hoped would compel Basil to raise the siege of Widdin, or, at all events, enable him to inflict a deep wound on the empire. By a long march into the heart of the empire, Samuel rendered himself master of great booty. His success prevented his returning as rapidly as he had advanced, but he succeeded in passing the garrison of Philippopolis and crossing the Strymon and the Wardar in safety, when Basil suddenly overtook him at the head of the Byzantine army. Samuel was encamped under the walls of Scupi; Basil crossed the river, stormed the Bulgarian camp, captured the military chest and stores, and recovered the plunder of Hadrianoplis. He had thus the satisfaction of avenging the defeat he had suffered from Samuel, one-and-twenty years before, in the passes of Mount Hæmus.

In the year 1014, Basil considered everything ready for a final effort to complete the subjection of the Slavonian population of the mountainous districts round the upper valley of the Strymon. The emperor is said to have taken fifteen thousand prisoners, and, that he might revenge the sufferings of his subjects from the ravages of the Bulgarians and Slavonians, he gratified his own cruelty by an act of vengeance, which has most justly entailed infamy on his name. His frightful inhumanity has forced history to turn with disgust from his conduct, and almost buried the records of his military achievements in oblivion. On this occasion he ordered the eyes of all his prisoners to be put out, leaving a single eye to the leader of every hundred, and in this condition he sent the wretched captives forth to seek their king or perish on the way. When they approached Achrida, a rumour that the prisoners had been released induced Samuel to go out to meet them. On learning the full extent of the calamity, he fell senseless to the ground, overpowered with rage and grief, and died two days after. He is said to have murdered his own brother to secure possession of his throne, so that his heart was broken by the first touch of humanity it ever felt.[1]

The cruelty of Basil awakened an energetic resistance on the part of the Slavonians and Bulgarians, and Gabriel Radomir, the brave son of Samuel, was enabled to offer unexpected obstacles to the progress of the Byzantine armies.

Gabriel, the king of Achrida, though brave, alienated the favour of his subjects by his imprudence, and his cousin, John Ladislas, whose life he had saved in youth, was base enough to become his murderer, in order to gain possession of the throne. Ladislas, in order to gain time, both for strengthening himself on the throne and resisting the Byzantine invasion, sent

[1] Cruelty similar to that of Basil was perpetrated on a smaller scale by Richard Cœur-de-Lion, though of course it is not necessary to place strict reliance on the numbers reported by the Byzantine historians. Richard, to revenge the loss of a body of men, ordered three hundred French knights to be thrown into the Seine, and put out the eyes of fifteen, who were sent home blind, led by one whose right eye had been spared. Philip Augustus, nothing loath, revenged himself by treating fifteen English knights in the same way. — Putting out men's eyes was, for several centuries, a common practice all over Europe, and not regarded with much horror. As late as the reign of Henry IV. 1403 A.D., an Act of Parliament was passed, making it felony for Englishmen to cut out one another's tongues, or put out their neighbours' eyes.

[1014–1019 A.D.]

ambassadors to Basil with favourable offers of peace; but the emperor, satisfied that the struggle between the Slavonians and Greeks could only be terminated by the conquest of one, rejected all terms but absolute submission, and pushed on his operations with his usual vigour. After laying waste all the country round Ostrovos and Moliskos that was peopled by Slavonians, and repairing the fortifications of Berœa which had fallen to decay, he captured Setaina, where Samuel had formed great magazines of wheat. These magazines were kept well filled by Ladislas, so that Basil became master of so great a store that he divided it among his troops. At last the king of Achrida approached the emperor at the head of a considerable army, and a part of the imperial troops was drawn into an ambuscade. The emperor happened to be himself with the advanced division of the army. He instantly mounted his horse and led the troops about him to the scene of action, sending orders for all the other divisions to hasten forward to support him. His sudden appearance at the head of a strong body of the heavy-armed lancers of the Byzantine army, the fury of his charge, the terror his very name inspired, and the cry, "The emperor is upon us!" soon spread confusion through the Bulgarian ranks, and decisively changed the fortune of the day (1018).

Ladislas, whose affairs were becoming desperate, made an attempt to restore his credit by laying siege to Dyrrhachium. Its possession would have enabled him to open communications with the enemies of Basil in Italy, and even with the Saracens of Sicily and Africa, but he was slain soon after the commencement of the siege. The Bulgarian leaders gave up all hope of resistance. The emperor continued to advance by Scupi, Stypeia, and Prosakon, and on reaching Achrida he was received rather as the lawful sovereign than as a foreign conqueror. He immediately took possession of all the treasures Samuel had amassed; the gold alone amounted to one hundred centners (this sum is not quite equal to £480,000 sterling), and with this he paid all the arrears due to his troops, and rewarded them with a donative for their long and gallant service in this arduous war. Almost the whole of the royal family of Achrida submitted, and received the most generous treatment. Three sons of Ladislas, who escaped to Mount Tmorus, and attempted to prolong the contest, were soon captured. The noble Bulgarians hastened to make their submission, and many were honoured with rank at the imperial court.

Nothing, indeed, proves more decidedly the absence of all Greek nationality in the Byzantine administration at this period, than the facility with which all foreigners obtained favour at the court of Constantinople; nor can anything be more conclusive of the fact that the centralisation of power in the person of the emperor, as completed by the Basilian dynasty, had now destroyed the administrative centralisation of the old Roman imperial system, for we have proofs that a considerable Greek population still occupied the cities of Thrace and Macedonia, though Greek feelings had little influence on the government.

After passing the winter in his new conquests, Basil made a progress through Greece. At Zetunium he visited the field of battle where the power of Samuel had been first broken by the victory of Nicephorus Uranus, and found the ground still strewed with the bones of the slain. The wall that defended the pass of Thermopylæ retained its ancient name, Scelos; and its masonry, which dated from Hellenic days, excited the emperor's admiration. At last Basil arrived within the walls of Athens, and he was the only emperor who for several ages honoured that city with a visit.

Many magnificent structures in the town, and the whole of the temples in the Acropolis, had then hardly suffered any rude touches from the hand of time. If the original splendour of the external painting and gilding which had once adorned the Parthenon of Pericles had faded, the mural paintings of saints, martyrs, emperors, and empresses, that covered the interior of the cella, gave a new interest to the church of the Virgin, into which it had been transformed. The mind of Basil, though insensible to Hellenic literature, was deeply sensible of religious impressions, and the glorious combination of the variety of beauty in art and nature that he saw in the Acropolis touched his stern soul. He testified his feelings by splendid gifts to the city, and rich dedications at the shrine of the Virgin in the Parthenon.

From Greece the emperor returned to Constantinople, where he indulged himself in the pomp of a triumph, making his entry into his capital by the Golden Gate, and listening with satisfaction to the cries of the populace, who applauded his cruelty by saluting him with the title of "The Slayer of the Bulgarians" [Bulgaroctonus].[e]

Yet his subjects detested the rapacious and rigid avarice of Basil; and in the imperfect narrative of his exploits, we can only discern the courage, patience, and ferociousness of a soldier. After the first license of his youth, Basil II devoted his life, in the palace and the camp, to the penance of a hermit, wore the monastic habit under his robes and armour, observed a vow of continence, and imposed on his appetites a perpetual abstinence from wine and flesh. In the sixty-eighth year of his age, his martial spirit urged him to embark in person for a holy war against the Saracens of Sicily; he was prevented by death, and Basil, surnamed "the slayer of the Bulgarians," was dismissed from the world with the blessings of the clergy and the curses of the people. After his decease, in 1025, his brother Constantine IX enjoyed, about three years, the power, or rather the pleasures, of royalty; and his only care was the settlement of the succession. He had enjoyed sixty-six years the title of Augustus; and the reign of the two brothers is the longest, and most obscure, of the Byzantine history.

A lineal succession of five emperors, in a period of 160 years, had attached the loyalty of the Greeks to the Macedonian dynasty, which had been thrice respected by the usurpers of their power. After the death of Constantine IX, the last male of the royal race, a new and broken scene presents itself, and the accumulated years of twelve emperors do not equal the space of his single reign. Constantine had only three daughters. When their marriage was discussed in the council of their dying father, the cold or pious Theodora refused to give an heir to the empire, but her sister Zoe presented herself a willing victim at the altar. Romanus Argyrus, a patrician of a graceful person and fair reputation, was chosen for her husband, and, on his declining that honour, was informed that blindness or death was the second alternative. The motive of his reluctance was conjugal affection; but his faithful wife sacrificed her own happiness to his safety and greatness; and her entrance into a monastery removed the only bar to the imperial nuptials.

After the decease of Constantine, the sceptre devolved to Romanus III; but his labours at home and abroad [1] were equally feeble and fruitless; and the mature age, the forty-eight years of Zoe, was less favourable to the hopes of pregnancy than to the indulgence of pleasure. Her favourite chamberlain was a handsome Paphlagonian of the name of Michael, whose

[1] He was utterly defeated by the Saracens at Agaz in 1030; the fleets, however, won two victories.]

first trade had been that of a money-changer; and Romanus, either from gratitude or equity, connived at their criminal intercourse, or accepted a slight assurance of their innocence. But Zoe soon justified the Roman maxim, that every adulteress is capable of poisoning her husband; and the death of Romanus was instantly followed by the scandalous marriage and elevation of Michael IV.

The expectations of Zoe were, however, disappointed; instead of a vigorous and grateful lover, she had placed in her bed a miserable wretch whose health and reason were impaired by epileptic fits, and whose conscience was tormented by despair and remorse. The most skilful physicians of the mind and body were summoned to his aid; and his hopes were aroused by frequent pilgrimages to the baths, and to the tombs of the most popular saints; the monks applauded his penance, and, except restitution (but to whom should he have restored?) Michael sought every method of expiating his guilt. While he groaned and prayed in sackcloth and ashes, his brother, the eunuch Joannes, smiled at his remorse, and enjoyed the harvest of a crime of which himself was the secret and most guilty author. His administration[1] was only the art of satiating his avarice, and Zoe became a captive in the palace of her fathers and in the hands of her slaves. When he perceived the irretrievable decline of his brother's health, he introduced his nephew, another Michael, who derived the surname of Calaphates from his father's occupation in the careening of vessels; at the command of the eunuch, Zoe adopted for her son the son of a mechanic; and this fictitious heir was invested with the title and purple of the Cæsars, in the presence of the senate and clergy.

So feeble was the character of Zoe, that she was oppressed by the liberty and power which she recovered by the death of the Paphlagonian; and at the end of four days, she placed the crown on the head of Michael V who had protested, with tears and oaths, that he should ever reign the first and most obedient of her subjects. The only act of his short reign was his base ingratitude to his benefactors, the eunuch and the empress. The disgrace of the former was pleasing to the public; but the murmurs, and at length the clamours, of Constantinople deplored the exile of Zoe, the daughter of so many emperors; her vices were forgotten, and Michael was taught that there is a period in which the patience of the tamest slaves rises into fury and revenge. The citizens of every degree assembled in a formidable tumult which lasted three days; they besieged the palace, forced the gates, recalled their mothers — Zoe from her prison, Theodora from her monastery, and condemned the son of Calaphates to the loss of his eyes or of his life.

For the first time the Greeks beheld with surprise the two royal sisters seated on the same throne, presiding in the senate, and giving audience to the ambassadors of the nations. But this singular union subsisted no more than two months; the two sovereigns, their tempers, interests, and adherents, were secretly hostile to each other; and as Theodora was still adverse to marriage, the indefatigable Zoe, at the age of sixty, consented, for the public good, to sustain the embraces of a third husband, and the censures of the Greek church. His name and number were Constantine X and the epithet of Monomachus,[2] the single combatant, must have been expressive of

[1] The Saracens attacked the empire on all sides, and Sicily was all but won by the general Maniaces. It was lost through the incapacity of Michael's brother-in-law Stephen. In 1040 Servia regained her freedom, and the Slavonians and Bulgarians were driven to rebellion by the fiscal exactions of the eunuch Joannes called Orphanotrophus.]

[2] It was merely an hereditary surname, according to Finlay.*e*]

his valour and victory in some public or private quarrel.[1] But his health was broken by the tortures of the gout, and his dissolute reign was spent in the alternative of sickness and pleasure. A fair and noble widow had accompanied Constantine in his exile to the isle of Lesbos, and Sclerena gloried in the appellation of his mistress. After his marriage and elevation, she was invested with the title and pomp of Augusta, and occupied a contiguous apartment in the palace. The lawful consort (such was the delicacy or corruption of Zoe) consented to this strange and scandalous partition; and the emperor appeared in public between his wife and his concubine.*h*

### SEPARATION OF GREEK AND LATIN CHURCHES

In looking back from modern times at the history of the Byzantine Empire, the separation of the Greek and Latin churches appears the most important event in the reign of Constantine X; but its prominence is owing, on the one hand, to the circumstance that a closer connection began shortly after to exist between the Eastern and Western nations; and on the other, to the decline in the power of the Byzantine Empire, which gave ecclesiastical affairs greater importance than they would otherwise have merited. Had the successors of Constantine X continued to possess the power and resources of the successors of Leo III or Basil I, the schism would never have acquired the political importance it actually attained; for as it related to points of opinion on secondary questions, and details of ecclesiastical practice, the people would have abandoned the subject to the clergy and the church, as one not affecting the welfare of Christians, nor the interest of Christianity. The emperor Basil II, who was bigoted as well as pious, had still good sense to view the question as a political rather than a religious one.

He knew that it would be impossible to reunite the two churches; he saw the disposition of the Greek clergy to commence a quarrel, to avoid which he endeavoured to negotiate the amicable separation of the Byzantine ecclesiastical establishment from the papal supremacy. He proposed that the pope should be honoured as the first Christian bishop in rank, but that he should receive a pecuniary indemnity, and admit the right of the Eastern church to govern its own affairs according to its own constitution and local usages, and acknowledge the patriarch of Constantinople as its head. This plan, reasonable as it might appear to statesmen, had little chance of success.

The claim of the bishop of Rome to be the agent of the theocracy which ruled the Christian church, was too generally admitted to allow any limits to be put to his authority. The propositions of Basil II were rejected, but the open rupture with Rome did not take place until 1053, when it was caused by the violent and unjust conduct of the Greek patriarch, Michael Cerularius. He ordered all the Latin churches in the Byzantine Empire, in which mass was celebrated according to the rites of the Western church, to be closed; and, in conjunction with Leo, bishop of Achrida, the patriarch of Bulgaria, addressed a controversial letter to the bishop of Trani, which revived all the old disputes with the papal church, adding the question about the use of unleavened bread in the holy communion.

[1 Maniaces revolted, and proclaimed himself emperor. He was killed in the moment of victory by an arrow. Leo Tornicus, a relative of the emperor, besieged Constantinople but was repulsed. The imperial troops suffered defeats from the Servians, but repulsed the Russians and the Patzinaks. Armenia was conquered, 1045, and two invasions of Seljuk Turks beaten off.]

[1053–1056 A.D.]

The people on both sides, who understood little of the points contested by the clergy, adopted the simple rule, that it was their duty to hate the members of the other church; and the Greeks, having their nationality condensed in their ecclesiastical establishment, far exceeded the Western nations in ecclesiastical bigotry, for the people in the western nations of Europe were often not very friendly to papal pretensions. The extreme bigotry of the Greeks soon tended to make the people of the Byzantine Empire averse to all intercourse with the Latins, as equals, and they assumed a superiority over nations rapidly advancing in activity, wealth, power, and intelligence, merely because they deemed them heretics. The separation of the two churches proved, consequently, more injurious to the Greeks, in their stationary condition of society, than to the Western Christians, who were eagerly pressing forward in many paths of social improvement.

The empress Zoe died in the year 1050, at the age of seventy. Constantine X survived to the year 1054. When the emperor felt his end approaching, he ordered himself, according to the superstitious fashion of the time, to be transported to the monastery of Mangana, which he had constructed. His ministers, and especially his prime-minister, Joannes the logothetes, and president of the senate, urged him to name Nicephorus Bryennius, who commanded the Macedonian troops, his successor. The forms of the imperial constitution rendered it necessary that the sovereign should be crowned in Constantinople, and a courier was despatched to summon Bryennius to the capital. But as soon as Theodora heard of this attempt of her brother-in-law to deprive her of the throne she had been compelled to cede to him, she hastened to the imperial palace, convoked the senate, ordered the guards to be drawn out, and, presenting herself as the lawful empress, was proclaimed sovereign of the empire with universal acclamations. The news of this event embittered the last moments of the dying voluptuary, who hated Theodora for the respect her conduct inspired.[e]

In her name, and by the influence of four eunuchs, the Eastern world was peaceably governed about nineteen months; and as they wished to prolong their dominion, they persuaded the aged princess to nominate for her successor Michael VI. The surname of Stratioticus declares his military profession; but the crazy and decrepit veteran could only see with the eyes and execute with the hands of his ministers. Whilst he ascended the throne, Theodora sank into the grave — the last of the Macedonian or Basilian dynasty. We have hastily reviewed, and gladly dismiss, this shameful and destructive period of twenty-eight years, in which the Greeks, degraded below the common level of servitude, were transferred like a herd of cattle by the choice or caprice of two impotent females.

## THE COMNENI

From this night of slavery, a ray of freedom, or at least of spirit, begins to emerge; the Greeks either preserved or revived the use of surnames, which perpetuate the fame of hereditary virtue; and we now discern the rise, succession, and alliance, of the last dynasties of Constantinople and Trebizond. The Comneni, who upheld for a while the fate of the sinking empire, assumed the honour of a Roman origin; but the family had long since been transported from Italy to Asia. Their patrimonial estate was situate in the district of Castamona, in the neighbourhood of the Euxine; and one of their chiefs, who had already entered the paths of ambition, revisited

with affection, perhaps with regret, the modest though honourable dwelling of his fathers.

The first of their line was the illustrious Manuel, who, in the reign of the second Basil, contributed by war and treaty to appease the troubles of the East: he left, in a tender age, two sons, Isaac and Joannes, whom, with the consciousness of desert, he bequeathed to the gratitude and favour of his sovereign. The noble youths were carefully trained in the learning of the monastery, the arts of the palace, and the exercises of the camp; and from the domestic service of the guards, they were rapidly promoted to the command of provinces and armies. Their fraternal union doubled the force and reputation of the Comneni, and their ancient nobility was illustrated by the marriage of the two brothers with a captive princess of Bulgaria, and the daughter of a patrician, who had obtained the name of Charon from the number of enemies whom he had sent to the infernal shades. The soldiers had served with reluctant loyalty a series of effeminate masters; the elevation of Michael VI was a personal insult to the more deserving generals; and their discontent was inflamed by the parsimony of the emperor and the insolence of the eunuchs. They secretly assembled in the sanctuary of St. Sophia, and the votes of the military synod would have been unanimous in favour of the old and valiant Catacalon, if the patriotism or modesty of the veteran had not suggested the importance of birth as well as merit in the choice of a sovereign. Isaac Comnenus was approved by general consent, and the associates separated without delay to meet in the plains of Phrygia at the head of their respective squadrons and detachments.

The cause of Michael was defended in a single battle by the mercenaries of the imperial guard, who were aliens to the public interest, and animated only by a principle of honour and gratitude. After their defeat, the fears of the emperor solicited a treaty, which was almost accepted by the moderation of the Comnenian. But the former was betrayed by his ambassadors, and the latter was prevented by his friends. The solitary Michael submitted to the voice of the people; the patriarch annulled their oath of allegiance; and as he shaved the head of the royal monk, congratulated his beneficial exchange of temporal royalty for the kingdom of heaven; an exchange, however, which the priest, on his own account, would probably have declined.

By the hands of the same patriarch, Isaac Comnenus was solemnly crowned; the sword, which he inscribed on his coins, might be an offensive symbol, if it implied his title by conquest; but this sword would have been drawn against the foreign and domestic enemies of the state.[1] The decline of his health and vigour suspended the operation of active virtue;[2] and the prospect of approaching death determined him to interpose some moments between life and eternity. But instead of leaving the empire as the marriage portion of his daughter, his reason and inclination concurred in the preference of his brother Joannes, a soldier, a patriot, and the father of five sons, the

[1] "To contemporaries, this revolution presented nothing to distinguish it from the changes of sovereign, which had been an ordinary event in the Byzantine Empire, and which were ascribed by the wisest statesmen of the time to the decree of heaven, and not to the working of political and moral causes, which the will of God allows the intelligence of man to employ for effecting the improvement or decline of human affairs. Perhaps no man then living perceived that this event was destined to change the whole system of government, destroy the fabric of the central administration, deliver up the provinces of Asia an easy conquest to the Seljuk Turks, and the capital a prey to a band of crusaders." *e*

[2] In 1059 Isaac marched against the Hungarians and Patzinaks, who were ravaging the northern frontier, and the invaders were soon compelled to sue for peace. This is the only opportunity Isaac had of showing his military ability.]

future pillars of an hereditary succession. His first modest reluctance might be the natural dictates of discretion and tenderness, but his obstinate and successful perseverance, however it may dazzle with the show of virtue, must be censured as a criminal desertion of his duty, and a rare offence against his family and country. The purple which he had refused was accepted by Constantine Ducas, a friend of the Comnenian house, and whose noble birth was adorned with the experience and reputation of civil policy. In the monastic habit, Isaac recovered his health, and survived two years his voluntary abdication. At the command of his abbot, he observed the rule of St. Basil, and executed the most servile offices of the convent; but his latent vanity was gratified by the frequent and respectful visits of the reigning monarch, who revered in his person a benefactor and a saint.

If Constantine XI were indeed the subject most worthy of empire, we must pity the debasement of the age and nation in which he was chosen. In the labour of puerile declamations he sought, without obtaining, the crown of eloquence, more precious, in his opinion, than that of Rome; and, in the subordinate functions of a judge, he forgot the duties of a sovereign and a warrior. Ducas was anxious only to secure, even at the expense of the republic, the power and prosperity of his children. His three sons, Michael VII, Andronicus I, and Constantine XII, were invested, at a tender age, with the equal title of Augustus; and the succession was speedily opened by their father's death. His widow, Eudocia, was entrusted with the administration.

Before the end of seven months, the wants of Eudocia, or those of the state, called aloud for the male virtues of a soldier; and her heart had already chosen Romanus Diogenes, whom she raised from the scaffold to the throne. The discovery of a treasonable attempt had exposed him to the severity of the laws; his beauty and valour absolved him in the eyes of the empress, and Romanus, from a mild exile, was recalled on the second day to the command of the oriental armies. Her royal choice was yet unknown to the public, and the promise which would have betrayed her falsehood and levity was stolen by a dexterous emissary from the ambition of the patriarch. Xiphilin at first alleged the sanctity of oaths and the sacred nature of a trust; but a whisper that his brother was the future emperor relaxed his scruples, and forced him to confess that the public safety was the supreme law. He resigned the important paper; and when his hopes were confounded by the nomination of Romanus, he could no longer regain his security, retract his declarations, nor oppose the second nuptials of the empress. Yet a murmur was heard in the palace; and the barbarian guards had raised their battle-axes in the cause of the house of Ducas, till the young princes were soothed by the tears of their mother and the assurances of the fidelity of their guardian, who filled the throne with dignity and honour.

## ROMANUS IN THE FIELD (1067-1071)

The false or genuine magnanimity of Mahmud the Ghaznavide was not imitated by Alp Arslan; and he attacked without scruple the Greek empress Eudocia and her children.[1] His alarming progress compelled her to give herself and her sceptre to the hand of a soldier; and Romanus Diogenes had been invested with the imperial purple. His patriotism, and perhaps his pride, urged him from Constantinople within two months after his accession; and

[1 Togrul Beg and Alp Arslan began their invasion from Mesopotamia in 1060; Avii was captured in 1064.]

the next campaign he most scandalously took the field during the holy festival of Easter. In the palace, Diogenes was no more than the husband of Eudocia; in the camp he was the emperor of the Romans, and he sustained that character with feeble resources and invincible courage. By his spirit and success, the soldiers were taught to act, the subjects to hope, and the enemies to fear. The Turks had penetrated into the heart of Phrygia; but the sultan himself had resigned to his emirs the prosecution of the war; and their numerous detachments were scattered over Asia in the security of conquest. Laden with spoil and careless of discipline, they were separately surprised and defeated by the Greeks; the activity of the emperor seemed to multiply his presence; and while they heard of his expedition to Antioch, the enemy felt his sword on the hills of Trebizond.

BYZANTINE EMPEROR IN THE COSTUME OF A GENERAL

In three laborious campaigns[1] the Turks were driven beyond the Euphrates; in the fourth and last, Romanus undertook the deliverance of Armenia. The desolation of the land obliged him to transport a supply of two months' provisions; and he marched forwards to the siege of Manzicert, an important fortress in the midway between the modern cities of Erzerum and Van. His army amounted, at the least, to one hundred thousand men. The troops of Constantinople were reinforced by the disorderly multitudes of Phrygia and Cappadocia; but the real strength was composed of the subjects and allies of Europe, the legions of Macedonia, and the squadrons of Bulgaria; the Uzi, a Moldavian horde, who were themselves of the Turkish race, and above all, the mercenary and adventurous bands of French and Normans. Their lances were commanded by the valiant Ursel of Baliol, the kinsman or father of the Scottish kings, and were allowed to excel in the exercise of arms, or, according to the Greek style, in the practice of the Pyrrhic dance.

On the report of this bold invasion, which threatened his hereditary dominions, Alp Arslan flew to the scene of action at the head of forty thousand horse. His rapid and skilful evolutions distressed and dismayed the superior numbers of the Greeks; and in the defeat of Basilacius, one of their principal generals, he displayed the first example of his valour and clemency. The imprudence of the emperor had separated his forces after the reduction of Manzicert. It was in vain that he attempted to recall the mercenary Franks; they refused to obey his summons; he disdained to await their return; the desertion of the Uzi filled his mind with anxiety and suspicion; and against the most salutary advice he rushed forwards to speedy and decisive action.

Had he listened to the fair proposals of the sultan, Romanus might have secured a retreat, perhaps a peace; but in these overtures he supposed the

[1 The campaign of 1070 was conducted by Manuel Comnenus, but after Alp Arslan captured Manzicert Romanus returned to the command.]

[1070 A.D.]

fear or weakness of the enemy, and his answer was conceived in the tone of insult and defiance. "If the barbarian wishes for peace, let him evacuate the ground which he occupies for the encampment of the Romans, and surrender his city and palace of Rei as a pledge of his sincerity." Alp Arslan smiled at the vanity of the demand, but he wept the death of so many faithful Moslems; and, after a devout prayer, proclaimed a free permission to all who were desirous of retiring from the field. With his own hands he tied up his horse's tail, exchanged his bow and arrows for a mace and scimitar, clothed himself in a white garment, perfumed his body with musk, and declared that if he were vanquished, that spot should be the place of his burial.

The sultan himself had affected to cast away his missile weapons; but his hopes of victory were placed in the arrows of the Turkish cavalry, whose squadrons were loosely distributed in the form of a crescent. Instead of the successive lines and reserves of the Grecian tactics, Romanus led his army in a single and solid phalanx, and pressed with vigour and impatience the artful and yielding resistance of the barbarians. In this desultory and fruitless combat he wasted the greater part of a summer's day, till prudence and fatigue compelled him to return to his camp. But a retreat is always perilous in the face of an active foe; and no sooner had the standard been turned to the rear, than the phalanx was broken by the base cowardice, or the baser jealousy, of Andronicus, a rival prince, who disgraced his birth and the purple of the cæsars. The Turkish squadrons poured a cloud of arrows on this moment of confusion and lassitude; and the horns of their formidable crescent was closed in the rear of the Greeks. In the destruction of the army and pillage of the camp, it would be needless to mention the number of slain or captives. The Byzantine writers deplore the loss of an inestimable pearl; they forget to mention that in this fatal day the Asiatic provinces of Rome were irretrievably sacrificed.

As long as a hope survived, Romanus attempted to rally and save the relics of his army. When the centre, the imperial station, was left naked on all sides and encompassed by the victorious Turks, he still, with desperate courage, maintained the fight till the close of day, at the head of the brave and faithful subjects who adhered to his standard. They fell around him; his horse was slain; the emperor was wounded; yet he stood alone and intrepid, till he was oppressed and bound by the strength of multitudes. The glory of this illustrious prize was disputed by a slave and a soldier; a slave who had seen him on the throne of Constantinople, and a soldier whose extreme deformity had been excused on the promise of some signal service. Despoiled of his arms, his jewels, and his purple, Romanus spent a dreary and perilous night on the field of battle, amidst a disorderly crowd of the meaner barbarians.

### CAPTIVITY OF THE EMPEROR

In the morning the royal captive was presented to Alp Arslan, who doubted of his fortune, till the identity of the person was ascertained by the report of his ambassadors, and by the more pathetic evidence of Basilacius, who embraced with tears the feet of his unhappy sovereign. The successor of Constantine, in a plebeian habit, was led into the Turkish divan, and commanded to kiss the ground before the lord of Asia. He reluctantly obeyed; and Alp Arslan, starting from his throne, is said to have planted his foot on the neck of the Roman emperor. But the fact is doubtful; and if, in this

moment of insolence, the sultan complied with a national custom, the rest of his conduct has extorted the praise of his bigoted foes, and may afford a lesson to the most civilised ages. He instantly raised the royal captive from the ground; and thrice clasping his hand with tender sympathy, assured him that his life and dignity should be inviolate in the hands of a prince who had learned to respect the majesty of his equals and the vicissitudes of fortune. From the divan, Romanus was conducted to an adjacent tent, where he was served with pomp and reverence by the officers of the sultan, who, twice each day, seated him in the place of honour at his own table. In a free and familiar conversation of eight days, not a word, not a look, of insult escaped from the conqueror; but he severely censured the unworthy subjects who had deserted their valiant prince in the hour of danger, and gently admonished his antagonist of some errors which he had committed in the management of the war. In the preliminaries of negotiation, Alp Arslan asked him what treatment he expected to receive, and the calm indifference of the emperor displays the freedom of his mind. "If you are cruel," he said, "you will take my life; if you listen to pride, you will drag me at your chariot wheels; if you consult your interest you will accept a ransom, and restore me to my country." "And what," continued the sultan, "would have been your own behaviour, had fortune smiled on your arms?" The reply of the Greek betrays a sentiment which prudence, and even gratitude, should have taught him to suppress. "Had I vanquished," he fiercely said, "I would have inflicted on thy body many a stripe."

The Turkish conqueror smiled at the insolence of his captive; observed that the Christian law inculcated the love of enemies and forgiveness of injuries; and nobly declared that he would not imitate an example which he condemned. After mature deliberation, Alp Arslan dictated the terms of liberty and peace — a ransom of a million, an annual tribute of 360,000 pieces of gold, the marriage of the royal children, and the deliverance of all the Moslems who were in the power of the Greeks. Romanus, with a sigh, subscribed this treaty, so disgraceful to the majesty of the empire; he was immediately invested with a Turkish robe of honour; his nobles and patricians were restored to their sovereign; and the sultan, after a courteous embrace, dismissed him with rich presents and a military guard. No sooner did he reach the confines of the empire, than he was informed that the palace and provinces had disclaimed their allegiance to a captive; a sum of two hundred thousand pieces was painfully collected; and the fallen monarch transmitted this part of his ransom, with a sad confession of his impotence and disgrace.

In the treaty of peace, it does not appear that Alp Arslan extorted any province or city from the captive emperor; and his revenge was satisfied with the trophies of his victory and the spoils of Anatolia, from Antioch to the Black Sea. The fairest part of Asia was subject to his laws; twelve hundred princes, or the sons of princes, stood before his throne; and two hundred thousand soldiers marched under his banners. The sultan disdained to pursue the fugitive Greeks; but he meditated the more glorious conquest of Turkestan, the original seat of the house of Seljuk.

[While the Turks were getting control of Asia Minor the Byzantine Empire lost its last hold on Italy. Robert Guiscard had taken, one after another, the cities of the empire, and in 1068 laid siege to Bari. Romanus sent a fleet under Gosselin, but Guiscard's brother Roger defeated him. Bari capitulated in April, 1071, and the direct authority of the Roman Empire in Italy was gone forever.]

[1071-1078 A.D.]

## THE SONS OF CONSTANTINE XI. AND NICEPHORUS III (1071-1081 A.D.)

The defeat and captivity of Romanus IV inflicted a deadly wound on the Byzantine monarchy of the East; and after he was released from the chains of the sultan, he vainly sought his wife and subjects. His wife had been thrust into a monastery, and the subjects of Romanus had embraced the rigid maxim of the civil law, that a prisoner in the hands of the enemy is deprived, as by the stroke of death, of all public and private rights of a citizen. In the general consternation, the cæsar Joannes asserted the indefeasible right of his three nephews. Constantinople listened to his voice, and the Turkish captive was proclaimed in the capital, and received on the frontier, as an enemy of the republic. Romanus was not more fortunate in domestic than in foreign war: the loss of two battles compelled him to yield, on the assurance of fair and honourable treatment; but his enemies were devoid of faith or humanity, and, after the cruel extinction of his sight, his wounds were left to bleed and corrupt, till in a few days he was relieved from a state of misery.

Under the triple reign of the house of Ducas, the two younger brothers were reduced to the vain honours of the purple; but the eldest, the pusillanimous Michael, was incapable of sustaining the Roman sceptre; and his surname of Parapinaces denotes the reproach which he shared with an avaricious favourite, who enhanced the price, and diminished the measure, of wheat. In the school of Psellus, and after the example of his mother, the son of Eudocia made some proficiency in philosophy and rhetoric; but his character was degraded, rather than ennobled, by the virtues of a monk and the learning of a sophist.

Strong in the contempt of their sovereign and their own esteem, two generals, at the head of the European and Asiatic legions, assumed the purple at Hadrianopolis and Nicæa. Their revolt was in the same month; they bore the same name of Nicephorus; but the two candidates were distinguished by the surnames of Bryennius and Botaniates: the former in the maturity of wisdom and courage, the latter conspicuous only by the memory of his past exploits. While Botaniates advanced with cautious and dilatory steps, his active competitor stood in arms before the gates of Constantinople. The name of Bryennius was illustrious; his cause was popular; but his licentious troops could not be restrained from burning and pillaging a suburb; and the people, who would have hailed the rebel, rejected and repulsed the incendiary of his country. This change of the public opinion was favourable to Botaniates, who at length, with an army of Turks, approached the shores of Chalcedon.

A formal invitation, in the name of the patriarch, the synod, and the senate, was circulated through the streets of Constantinople; and the general assembly, in the dome of St. Sophia, debated with order and calmness on the choice of their sovereign. The guards of Michael would have dispersed this unarmed multitude; but the feeble emperor, applauding his own moderation and clemency, resigned the ensigns of royalty, and was rewarded with the monastic habit and the title of archbishop of Ephesus. He left a son, a Constantine, born and educated in the purple; and a daughter of the house of Ducas illustrated the blood, and confirmed the succession, of the Comnenian dynasty.

Joannes Comnenus, the brother of the emperor Isaac, survived in peace and dignity his generous refusal of the sceptre. By his wife Anne, a woman of masculine spirit and policy, he left eight children; the three daughters

multiplied the Comnenian alliances with the noblest Greeks; of the five sons, Manuel was stopped by a premature death; Isaac and Alexius restored the imperial greatness of their house, which was enjoyed without toil or danger by the two younger brethren, Adrian and Nicephorus. Alexius, the third and most illustrious of the brothers, was endowed by nature with the choicest gifts both of mind and body; they were cultivated by a liberal education, and exercised in the school of obedience and adversity. The youth was dismissed from the perils of the Turkish War,[1] by the paternal care of the emperor Romanus; but the mother of the Comneni, with her aspiring race, was accused of treason, and banished, by the sons of Ducas, to an island in the Propontis. The two brothers soon emerged into favour and action, fought by each other's side against the rebels and barbarians, and adhered to the emperor Michael, till he was deserted by the world and by himself.

In his first interview with Botaniates, "Prince," said Alexius, with a noble frankness, "my duty rendered me your enemy; the decrees of God and of the people have made me your subject. Judge of my future loyalty by my past opposition." The successor of Michael entertained him with esteem and confidence; his valour was employed against three rebels, who disturbed the peace of the empire, or at least of the emperors. Ursel, Bryennius, and Basilacius were formidable by their numerous forces and military fame: they were successively vanquished in the field, and led in chains to the foot of the throne; and whatever treatment they might receive from a timid and cruel court, they applauded the clemency, as well as the courage, of their conqueror. But the loyalty of the Comneni was soon tainted by fear and suspicion; nor is it easy to settle between a subject and a despot the debt of gratitude, which the former is tempted to claim by a revolt, and the latter to discharge by an executioner. The refusal of Alexius to march against a fourth rebel, the husband of his sister, destroyed the merit or memory of his past services; the favourites of Botaniates provoked the ambition which they apprehended and accused; and the retreat of the two brothers might be justified by the defence of their life or liberty.

The women of the family were deposited in a sanctuary, respected by tyrants; the men, mounted on horseback, sallied from the city, and erected the standard of civil war. The soldiers, who had been gradually assembled in the capital and the neighbourhood, were devoted to the cause of a victorious and injured leader; the ties of common interest and domestic alliance secured the attachment of the house of Ducas; and the generous dispute of the Comneni was terminated by the decisive resolution of Isaac, who was the first to invest his younger brother with the name and ensigns of royalty. They returned to Constantinople, to threaten rather than besiege that impregnable fortress; but the fidelity of the guards was corrupted; a gate was surprised, and the fleet was occupied by the active courage of George Palæologus, who fought against his father, without foreseeing that he laboured for his posterity. Alexius ascended the throne; and his aged competitor disappeared in a monastery. An army of various nations was gratified with the pillage of the city; but the public disorders were expiated by the tears and fasts of the Comneni, who submitted to every penance.

[1 The Turkish war was renewed in 1072 when Alp Arslan was unable to obtain payment of Romanus' ransom. He finally conquered the Byzantine portion of Asia Minor and gave it to Suleiman to rule over. In 1076 Jerusalem fell before the Seljuks, and this event was the direct cause of the Crusades. Nor were these the only foreign troubles of the empire at this period. In 1073 the Bulgarians made a desperate attempt to regain their liberty.]

[1081 A.D.]

### ANNA COMNENA'S HISTORY

The life of the emperor Alexius has been delineated by a favourite daughter, who was inspired by a tender regard for his person, and a laudable zeal to perpetuate his virtues. Conscious of the just suspicion of her readers, the princess Anna Comnena[i] repeatedly protests, that, besides her personal knowledge, she had searched the discourse and writings of the most respectable veterans; that, after an interval of thirty years, forgotten by, and forgetful of, the world, her mournful solitude was inaccessible to hope and fear; and that truth, the naked, perfect truth, was more dear and sacred than the memory of her parent. Yet, instead of the simplicity of style and narrative which wins our belief, an elaborate affectation of rhetoric and science betrays in every page the vanity of a female author. The genuine character of Alexius is lost in a vague constellation of virtues; and the perpetual strain of panegyric and apology awakens our jealousy, to question the veracity of the historian and the merit of the hero. We cannot, however, refuse her judicious and important remark, that the disorders of the times were the misfortune and the glory of Alexius; and that every calamity which can afflict a declining empire was accumulated on his reign by the justice of heaven and the vices of his predecessors.

A Byzantine Soldier

### TROUBLES OF ALEXIUS

In the East, the victorious Turks had spread from Persia to the Hellespont the reign of the *Koran* and the crescent; the West was invaded by the adventurous valour of the Normans; and, in the moments of peace, the Danube poured forth new swarms, who had gained in the science of war what they had lost in the ferociousness of manners. The sea was not less hostile than the land; and while the frontiers were assaulted by an open enemy, the palace was distracted with secret treason and conspiracy.[h]

One of the earliest acts of the reign of Alexius was to conclude a treaty of peace with the Seljuk emir Suleiman, who acted in Asia Minor as if he were completely independent of the grand sultan Malekshah. The treachery of Nicephorus Melissenos had placed Suleiman in possession of Nicæa, and his troops occupied several posts on the shores of the Bosporus and the Sea of Marmora; while Alexius, who required the whole forces of the empire to resist the invasion of Robert Guiscard, was compelled to purchase peace at any price. Under such circumstances, it was only to be expected that the immediate neighbourhood of Constantinople could be kept free from the Turks, and accordingly the boundaries of the Roman Empire in Asia Minor

were by this treaty reduced to very narrow limits. The country immediately opposite the capital, as far as the mouth of the river Sangarius and the head of the Gulf of Nicomedia, was evacuated by the Turks, as well as the coasts of the Sea of Marmora, from the little stream called Draco, which falls into the Gulf of Nicomedia, westward to the city of Prusias. Already the mountains of the Turkish territory were visible from the palace of Alexius and the dome of St. Sophia; but the Crusades were destined to repel the Mohammedan invasion from the shores of Europe for several centuries.

### THE NORMAN INVASION

The spirit of enterprise and conquest which, when placed under the guidance of religious enthusiasm, carried the bravest warriors of western Europe as crusaders to the East, had, in the preceding generation, under the direction of civil wisdom, produced the conquest of England and southern Italy by the Normans. These conquests had raised their military reputation and self-confidence to the highest pitch; and Robert Guiscard, who was lord of dominions in Italy far superior in wealth to the duchy of Normandy, hoped to eclipse the exploits of Duke William in England by conquering the Byzantine Empire. But as he knew that he must expect a more prolonged resistance than England had offered to its conqueror, he sought a pretext for commencing the war which would conceal his own object, and have a tendency to induce a party in the country to take up arms against the government he was anxious to overthrow. His daughter Helena had been betrothed to Constantine Ducas, the son of Michael VII, and was still so young that she was residing in the imperial palace at Constantinople, to receive her education, when Michael was dethroned. Nicephorus III sent the child to a convent, and Robert her father stood forward as the champion of Michael's right to recover the throne from which he had been expelled. Under the cover of this pretext, the Norman expected to render himself master of Constantinople, or at all events to gain possession of the rich provinces on the eastern shore of the Adriatic.

The preparations of Robert Guiscard were far advanced when Alexius ascended the throne. To inflame the zeal of his troops, he persuaded Pope Gregory VII that a Greek monk, who had assumed the character of Michael VII, was really the dethroned emperor, and thus induced the pope to approve of his expedition, and to grant absolution to all the invaders of the Byzantine Empire, as if they had been about to commence a holy war. The soldiers were impressed with a deep conviction of the justice of their cause and were inflamed with hopes of plunder and glory.

In the month of June, 1081, Robert Guiscard sailed from Brindisi with a well-appointed fleet of a hundred and fifty ships, carrying an army of thirty thousand chosen troops. His first operation was to render himself master of the rich island of Corcyra (Corfu), which then yielded an annual revenue of fifteen hundred pounds' weight of gold to the Byzantine government. He then seized the ports of Butrinto, Avlona, and Kanino, on the mainland, and laid siege to the important city of Dyrrhachium, the strongest fortress on the eastern coast of the Adriatic, and the capital of Byzantine Illyria. It was fortunate for the empire that George Palæologus, one of its bravest officers, had entered the place before Robert commenced the siege.

The interests of Venice bound them to the cause of the Byzantine government at this time. They were alarmed lest their lucrative trade with

[1081-1084 A.D.]

Greece and the Levant should be placed at the mercy of the rapacious Normans, in case Robert Guiscard should succeed in gaining possession of the entrance to the Adriatic. They plunged, therefore, into the war without hesitation or reserve.

The doge Dominic Sylvio sailed from Venice with a powerful fleet to attack the Normans before the emperor Alexius could collect his army and march to the relief of Dyrrhachium. The Norman fleet, which was commanded by Bohemund, the illustrious son of Robert Guiscard, suffered a complete defeat, and the communications of the invading army with Italy were cut off. This difficulty only excited Robert to press the siege with additional vigour. He employed every device then known for the attack of towns. The military proceedings of Alexius, when he reached the neighbourhood of Dyrrhachium, were very injudicious. The battle which took place was as disgraceful to the Byzantine arms as to the emperor's judgment.

In the month of February, 1082, a Venetian, who guarded one of the towers, betrayed the city to Robert, who had previously put his army into winter quarters at Glabinitza and Joanina, in order to escape the severe cold of the winter farther north. Alexius collected the remains of the Byzantine army at Deavolis, and repaired himself to Thessalonica, where he passed the winter collecting a second army, which he was enabled to do, as he had replenished his military chest from the church plate of the richest cathedrals and monasteries in his dominions. The affairs of Italy, before the opening of the second campaign, fortunately compelled Robert Guiscard to quit Illyria, and leave his son Bohemund in command of the Norman army.

In the spring of 1083, Alexius had collected an army so powerful that he again marched forward to attack the Normans. In order to break the terrible charge of their cavalry, which no Byzantine horse could resist, the emperor placed a number of chariots before his own troops, armed with barbed poles extending in front like a line of lances, and in these chariots he stationed a strong body of heavy-armed infantry. Bohemund, however, on reconnoitring this strange unwieldy measure of defence, broke up his line of cavalry into two columns, and leaving the centre of the Byzantine army with the chariots unassailed, fell with fury on the extremity of the two wings. The resistance was short, and the emperor Alexius again fled.

Alexius, having procured a subsidiary force of seven thousand light cavalry from Suleiman and the sultan of Nicæa, again took the field in the spring of 1084. He formed his army into two divisions, and advanced to engage the Normans before Larissa. His preparation for a battle was on this occasion made with considerable skill. Bohemund, seeing that he was in danger of being cut off from his resources, retreated to Kastoria. As soon as the Norman army was cut off from plunder, and without any hope of making further conquests, it began to display a mutinous spirit; and Bohemund was compelled to return to Italy, to obtain supplies of money and fresh troops. Brienne, the constable of Apulia, who commanded in his absence, found himself compelled to surrender Kastoria to the emperor Alexius, and to engage not to bear arms again against the Byzantine Empire.

While Bohemund was carrying on the war against the emperor of the East, Robert Guiscard had driven the emperor of the West out of Rome; and after vanquishing Henry IV, he had plundered the Eternal City like another Genseric. He was now ready to resume his schemes of ambition in the East. Collecting a powerful fleet to carry over his victorious army into Epirus, he raised the siege of Corfu (Corcyra), which was invested by the

combined naval forces of the Byzantine Empire and the Venetian Republic. The united fleets were completely defeated in a great naval battle, in which, according to Anna Comnena,[i] they lost thirteen thousand men. But in the month of July, 1085, Robert died in the island of Cephallenia, and with him perished all the Norman projects of conquest in the Byzantine Empire. Dyrrhachium was recovered by Alexius with the assistance of the Venetian and Amalphitan merchants established in the place, and the services of the Venetians in this war were rewarded by many commercial privileges which were conferred on them by a golden bull.[e]

The Norman War was scarcely finished when the Patzinaks invaded the empire (1086). This war lasted five years, until, in fact, Alexius concluded a treaty with the Komans, allies of the Patzinaks, and then dealt the latter a crushing blow at Levounion in 1091. Minor wars with Servia and Dalmatia do not deserve mention, but the progress of the Seljuk Turks continued to hasten the decline of the empire. They dared everything, and in 1092 Tzachas, emir of Smyrna, assumed the title of emperor. He was put down, but retained sufficient strength to besiege Abydos in 1093. But Alexius accomplished his murder the same year. The relations of Alexius and the First Crusade will be fully treated in the account of the Holy Wars. The ancient enmity of Alexius and Bohemund was rekindled when the latter entered into his principality of Antioch. The war lasted from 1103 to 1108, or until Bohemund's death. The last years of Alexius' reign were occupied with hostilities with the crusaders and again with the Seljuk Turks. The latter sustained a succession of heavy losses, and in 1116 were glad to make peace. This was the end of Alexius' military career.[a]

In the tempest of the Crusades Alexius steered the imperial vessel with dexterity and courage. At the head of his armies, he was bold in action, skilful in stratagem, patient of fatigue, ready to improve his advantages, and rising from his defeats with inexhaustible vigour.

In his intercourse with the Latins, Alexius was patient and artful; his discerning eye pervaded the new system of an unknown world; and we shall hereafter describe the superior policy with which he balanced the interests and passions of the champions of the First Crusade. In a long reign of thirty-seven years, he subdued and pardoned the envy of his equals; the laws of public and private order were restored; the arts of wealth and science were cultivated; the limits of the empire were enlarged in Europe and Asia; and the Comnenian sceptre was transmitted to his children of the third and fourth generation.

Anna is a faithful witness that his happiness was destroyed, and his health was broken, by the cares of a public life; the patience of Constantinople was fatigued by the length and severity of his reign; and before Alexius expired, he had lost the love and reverence of his subjects. The clergy could not forgive his application of the sacred riches to the defence of the state; but they applauded his theological learning and ardent zeal for the orthodox faith, which he defended with his tongue, his pen, and his sword. His character was degraded by the superstition of the Greeks; and the same inconsistent principle of human nature enjoined the emperor to found a hospital for the poor and infirm, and to direct the execution of a heretic, who was burned alive in the square of St. Sophia.

In his last hours, when he was pressed by his wife Irene to alter the succession, he raised his head, and breathed a pious ejaculation on the vanity of this world. The indignant reply of the empress may be inscribed as an epitaph on his tomb—"You die, as you have lived—a hypocrite!" (1118).

JOANNES (II) COMNENUS (CALO-JOANNES) (1118-1143 A.D.)

It was the wish of Irene to supplant the eldest of her surviving sons, in favour of her daughter, the princess Anna, whose philosophy would not have refused the weight of a diadem. But the order of male succession was asserted by the friends of their country; the lawful heir drew the royal signet from the finger of his insensible or unconscious father, and the empire obeyed the master of the palace. Anna Comnena was stimulated by ambition and revenge to conspire against the life of her brother; and when the design was prevented by the fears or scruples of her husband, she passionately exclaimed, that nature had mistaken the two sexes, and had endowed Bryennius with the soul of a woman.

The two sons of Alexius, Joannes and Isaac, maintained the fraternal concord, the hereditary virtue of their race; and the younger brother was content with the title of Sebastocrator, which approached the dignity, without sharing the power, of the emperor. In the same person, the claims of primogeniture and merit were fortunately united; his swarthy complexion, harsh features, and diminutive stature, had suggested the ironical surname of Calo-Joannes, or John the Handsome, which his grateful subjects more seriously applied to the beauties of his mind.

After the discovery of her treason, the life and fortune of Anna were justly forfeited to the laws. Her life was spared by the clemency of the emperor; but he visited the pomp and treasures of her palace, and bestowed the rich confiscation on the most deserving of his friends. That respectable friend, Axuch, a slave of Turkish extraction, presumed to decline the gift, and to intercede for the criminal; his generous master applauded and imitated the virtue of his favourite, and the reproach or complaint of an injured brother was the only chastisement of the guilty princess. After this example of clemency, the remainder of his reign was never disturbed by conspiracy or rebellion; feared by his nobles, beloved by his people, Joannes was never reduced to the painful necessity of punishing, or even of pardoning, his personal enemies.

During his government of twenty-five years, the penalty of death was abolished in the Roman Empire, a law of mercy most delightful to the humane theorist, but of which the practice, in a large and vicious community, is seldom consistent with the public safety. Severe to himself, indulgent to others, chaste, frugal, abstemious, the philosophic Marcus would not have disdained the artless virtues of his successor, derived from his heart, and not borrowed from the schools. He despised and moderated the stately magnificence of the Byzantine court, so oppressive to the people, so contemptible to the eye of reason. Under such a prince, innocence had nothing to fear, and merit had everything to hope; and without assuming the tyrannic office of a censor, he introduced a gradual though visible reformation in the public and private manners of Constantinople. The only defect of this accomplished character was the frailty of noble minds — the love of arms and military glory. Yet the frequent expeditions of John the Handsome may be justified, at least in their principle, by the necessity of repelling the Turks from the Hellespont and the Bosporus. The sultan of the Iconium was confined to his capital, the barbarians were driven to the mountains, and the maritime provinces of Asia enjoyed the transient blessings of their deliverance. From Constantinople to Antioch and Aleppo, he repeatedly marched at the head of a victorious army, and in the sieges and battles of this holy war his Latin allies were astonished by the superior spirit and prowess of a

Greek. As he began to indulge the ambitious hope of restoring the ancient limits of the empire, as he revolved in his mind, the Euphrates and the Tigris, the dominion of Syria, and the conquest of Jerusalem, the thread of his life and of the public felicity was broken by a singular accident. He hunted the wild boar in the valley of Anazarbus, and had fixed his javelin in the body of the furious animal; but, in the struggle, a poisoned arrow dropped from his quiver, and a slight wound in his hand, which produced a mortification, was fatal to the best and greatest of the Comnenian princes.

## MANUEL I (1143–1180 A.D.)

A premature death had swept away the two eldest sons of John the Handsome; of the two survivors, Isaac and Manuel, his judgment or affection preferred the younger; and the choice of their dying prince was ratified by the soldiers, who had applauded the valour of his favourite in the Turkish War. The faithful Axuch hastened to the capital, secured the person of Isaac in honourable confinement, and purchased with a gift of two hundred pounds of silver the leading ecclesiastics of St. Sophia, who possessed a decisive voice in the consecration of an emperor. With his veteran and affectionate troops, Manuel soon visited Constantinople; his brother acquiesced in the title of Sebastocrator; his subjects admired the lofty stature and martial graces of their new sovereign, and listened with credulity to the flattering promise, that he blended the wisdom of age with the activity and vigour of youth. By the experience of his government, they were taught, that he emulated the spirit, and shared the talents, of his father, whose social virtues were buried in the grave. A reign of thirty-seven years is filled by a perpetual though various warfare against the Turks, the Christians, and the hordes of the wilderness beyond the Danube. The arms of Manuel were exercised on Mount Taurus, in the plains of Hungary, on the coast of Italy and Egypt, and on the seas of Sicily and Greece; the influence of his negotiations extended from Jerusalem to Rome and Russia; and the Byzantine monarchy, for a while, became an object of respect or terror to the powers of Asia and Europe.

Educated in the silk and purple of the East, Manuel possessed the iron temper of a soldier, which cannot easily be paralleled, except in the lives of Richard I of England, and of Charles XII of Sweden. Such was his strength and exercise in arms, that Raymond, surnamed the Hercules of Antioch, was incapable of wielding the lance and buckler of the Greek emperor. In a famous tournament, he entered the lists on a fiery courser, and overturned in his first career two of the stoutest of the Italian knights. The first in the charge, the last in the retreat, his friends and his enemies alike trembled, the former for his safety and the latter for their own. After posting an ambuscade in a wood, he rode forwards in search of some perilous adventure, accompanied only by his brother and the faithful Axuch, who refused to desert their sovereign. Eighteen horsemen, after a short combat, fled before them; but the numbers of the enemy increased; the march of the reinforcement was tardy and fearful, and Manuel, without receiving a wound, cut his way through a squadron of five hundred Turks. In a battle against the Hungarians, impatient of the slowness of his troops, he snatched a standard from the head of the column, and was the first, almost alone, who passed a bridge that separated him from the enemy. In the same country, after transporting his army beyond the Save, he sent back the boats with an

[1143-1180 A.D.]

order, under pain of death, to their commander, that he should leave him to conquer or die on that hostile land. In the siege of Corfu, towing after him a captive galley, the emperor stood aloft on the poop, opposing against the volleys of darts and stones a large buckler and a flowing sail; nor could he have escaped inevitable death, had not the Sicilian admiral enjoined his archers to respect the person of a hero. In one day, he is said to have slain above forty of the barbarians with his own hand; he returned to the camp, dragging along four Turkish prisoners, whom he had tied to the rings of his saddle; he was ever the foremost to provoke or to accept a single combat; and the gigantic champions, who encountered his arm, were transpierced by the lance, or cut asunder by the sword, of the invincible Manuel. The story of his exploits, which appear as a model or copy of the romances of chivalry, may induce a reasonable suspicion of the veracity of the Greeks; yet we may observe, that, in the long series of their annals, Manuel is the only prince who has been the subject of similar exaggeration. With the valour of a soldier, he did not unite the skill or prudence of a general; his victories were not productive of any permanent or useful conquest; and his Turkish laurels were blasted in his last unfortunate campaign, in which he lost his army in the mountains of Pisidia, and owed his deliverance to the generosity of the sultan.

But the most singular feature in the character of Manuel, is the contrast and vicissitude of labour and sloth, of hardiness and effeminacy. In war he seemed ignorant of peace; in peace he appeared incapable of war. In the field he slept in the sun or in the snow, tired in the longest marches the strength of his men and horses, and shared with a smile the abstinence or diet of the camp. No sooner did he return to Constantinople, than he resigned himself to the arts and pleasures of a life of luxury; the expense of his dress, his table, and his palace, surpassed the measure of his predecessors, and whole summer days were idly wasted in the delicious isles of the Propontis, in the incestuous love of his niece Theodora. The double cost of a warlike and dissolute prince exhausted the revenue, and multiplied the taxes; and Manuel, in the distress of his last Turkish campaign, endured a bitter reproach from the mouth of a desperate soldier. As he quenched his thirst, he complained that the water of a fountain was mingled with Christian blood.

"It is not the first time," exclaimed a voice from the crowd, "that you have drunk, O emperor! the blood of your Christian subjects."

Manuel Comnenus was twice married; to the virtuous Bertha or Irene of Germany, and to the beauteous Maria, a French or Latin princess of Antioch. The only daughter of his first wife was destined for Bela, a Hungarian prince, who was educated at Constantinople, under the name of Alexius; and the consummation of their nuptials might have transferred the Roman sceptre to a race of free and warlike barbarians. But as soon as Maria of Antioch had given a son and heir to the empire, the presumptive rights of Bela were abolished, and he was deprived of his promised bride; but the Hungarian prince resumed his name and the kingdom of his fathers, and displayed such virtues as might excite the regret and envy of the Greeks. The son of Maria was named Alexius; and at the age of ten years, he ascended the Byzantine throne, after his father's decease had closed the glories of the Comnenian line.

The fraternal concord of the two sons of the great Alexius had been sometimes clouded by an opposition of interest and passion. By ambition, Isaac the Sebastocrator was excited to flight and rebellion, from whence he was reclaimed by the firmness and clemency of John the Handsome. The errors

of Isaac, the father of the emperors of Trebizond, were short and venial; but Joannes, the elder of his sons, renounced forever his religion. Provoked by a real or imaginary insult of his uncle, he escaped from the Roman to the Turkish camp; his apostacy was rewarded with the Sultan's daughter, the title of Chelebi, or noble, and the inheritance of a princely estate; and in the fifteenth century Muhammed II boasted of his imperial descent from the Comnenian family.

### *The Adventures of Andronicus*

Andronicus, the younger brother of Joannes, son of Isaac, and grandson of Alexius Comnenus, is one of the most conspicuous characters of the age; and his genuine adventures might form the subject of a very singular romance. To justify the choice of three ladies of royal birth, it must be observed, that their fortunate lover was cast in the best proportions of strength and beauty; and that the want of the softer graces was supplied by a manly countenance, a lofty stature, athletic muscles, and the air and deportment of a soldier. The preservation, in his old age, of health and vigour, was the reward of temperance and exercise. A piece of bread and a draught of water was often his sole and evening repast; and if he tasted of a wild boar, or a stag, which he had roasted with his own hands, it was the well-earned fruit of a laborious chase. Dexterous in arms, he was ignorant of fear; his persuasive eloquence could bend to every situation and character of life; his style, though not his practice, was fashioned by the example of St. Paul: and, in every deed of mischief, he had a heart to resolve, a head to contrive, and a hand to execute.

In his youth, after the death of the emperor Joannes, he followed the retreat of the Roman army; but in the march through Asia Minor, design or accident tempted him to wander in the mountains; the hunter was encompassed by the Turkish huntsmen, and he remained some time a reluctant or willing captive in the power of the Sultan. His virtues and vices recommended him to the favour of his cousin; he shared the perils and the pleasures of Manuel; and while the emperor lived in public incest with his niece Theodora, the affections of her sister Eudocia were seduced and enjoyed by Andronicus. Above the decencies of her sex and rank, she gloried in the name of his concubine; and both the palace and the camp could witness that she slept or watched in the arms of her lover. She accompanied him to his military command of Cilicia, the first scene of his valour and imprudence. He pressed, with active ardour, the siege of Mopsuestia; the day was employed in the boldest attacks, but the night was wasted in song and dance, and a band of Greek comedians formed the choicest part of his retinue.

Andronicus was surprised by the sally of a vigilant foe; but while his troops fled in disorder, his invincible lance transpierced the thickest ranks of the Armenians. On his return to the imperial camp in Macedonia, he was received by Manuel with public smiles and a private reproof; but the duchies of Naissus, Braniseba, and Kastoria were the reward or consolation of the unsuccessful general. Eudocia still attended his motions; at midnight, their tent was suddenly attacked by her angry brothers, impatient to expiate her infamy in his blood; his daring spirit refused her advice, and the disguise of a female habit; and, boldly starting from his couch, he drew his sword, and cut his way through the numerous assassins. It was here that he first betrayed his ingratitude and treachery; he engaged in a

[1143–1180 A.D.]

treasonable correspondence with the king of Hungary and the German emperor, approached the royal tent at a suspicious hour with a drawn sword, and under the mask of a Latin soldier, avowed an intention of revenge against a mortal foe; and imprudently praised the fleetness of his horse as an instrument of flight and safety. The monarch dissembled his suspicions; but, after the close of the campaign, Andronicus was arrested, and strictly confined in a tower of the palace of Constantinople.

In this prison he was left above twelve years, a most painful restraint, from which the thirst of action and pleasure perpetually urged him to escape. Alone and pensive, he perceived some broken bricks in a corner of the chamber, and gradually widened the passage, till he had explored a dark and forgotten recess. Into this hole he conveyed himself and the remains of his provisions, replacing the bricks in their former positions, and erasing with care the footsteps of his retreat. At the hour of the customary visit, his guards were amazed with the silence and solitude of the prison, and reported, with shame and fear, his incomprehensible flight.

A Byzantine Soldier

The gates of the palace and city were instantly shut: the strictest orders were despatched into the provinces for the recovery of the fugitive; and his wife, on the suspicion of a pious act, was basely imprisoned in the same tower. At the dead of night she beheld a spectre: she recognised her husband; they shared their provisions; and a son was the fruit of the stolen interviews; which alleviated the tediousness of their confinement. In the custody of a woman, the vigilance of the keepers was insensibly relaxed; and the captive had accomplished his real escape, when he was discovered, brought back to Constantinople, and loaded with a double chain.

At length he found the moment and the means of his deliverance. A boy, his domestic servant, intoxicated the guards, and obtained in wax the impression of the keys. By the diligence of his friends, a similar key, with a bundle of ropes, was introduced into the prison, in the bottom of a hogshead. Andronicus employed, with industry and courage, the instruments of his safety, unlocked the doors, descended from the tower, concealed himself all day among the bushes, and without difficulty scaled in the night the garden-wall of the palace.

A boat was stationed for his reception; he visited his own house, embraced his children, cast away his chain, mounted a fleet horse, and directed his rapid course towards the banks of the Danube. At Anchialus in Thrace an intrepid friend supplied him with horses and money; he passed the river, traversed with speed the desert of Moldavia and the Carpathian hills, and had almost reached the town of Halicz, in Polish Russia, when he was intercepted by a party of Wallachians, who resolved to convey their important captive to Constantinople.

His presence of mind again extricated him from this danger. Under the pretence of sickness, he dismounted in the night, and was allowed to step

aside from the troop; he planted in the ground his long staff; clothed it with his cap and upper garment; and, stealing into the wood, left a phantom to amuse, for some time, the eyes of the Wallachians. From Halicz he was honourably conducted to Kieff, the residence of the great duke; the subtle Greek soon obtained the esteem and confidence of Yaroslaff; his character could assume the manners of every climate; and the barbarians applauded his strength and courage in the chase of the elks and bears of the forest. In this northern region he deserved the forgiveness of Manuel, who solicited the Russian prince to join his arms in the invasion of Hungary. The influence of Andronicus achieved this important service; his private treaty was signed with a promise of fidelity on one side, and of oblivion on the other; and he marched, at the head of the Russian cavalry, from the Borysthenes to the Danube. In his resentment, Manuel had ever sympathised with the martial and dissolute character of his cousin; and his free pardon was sealed in the assault of Zemlin, in which he was second, and second only, to the valour of the emperor.

He was removed from the royal presence by an honourable banishment, a second command of the Cilician frontier, with the absolute disposal of the revenues of Cyprus. In this station, the Armenians again exercised his courage, and exposed his negligence; and the same rebel, who baffled all his operations, was unhorsed and almost slain by the vigour of his lance. But Andronicus soon discovered a more easy and pleasing conquest, the beautiful Philippa, sister of the empress Maria, and daughter of Raymond of Poitou, the Latin prince of Antioch. For her sake he deserted his station, and wasted the summer in balls and tournaments; to his love she sacrificed her innocence, her reputation, and the offer of an advantageous marriage. But the resentment of Manuel for this domestic affront interrupted his pleasures. The emperor still thirsted for revenge; and his subjects and allies of the Syrian frontier were repeatedly pressed to seize the person, and put out the eyes, of the fugitive. In Palestine he was no longer safe; but the tender Theodora revealed his danger and accompanied his flight. After a long circuit round the Caspian Sea and the mountains of Georgia, he finally settled among the Turks of Asia Minor, the hereditary enemies of his country. The sultan of Colonia afforded a hospitable retreat to Andronicus, his mistress, and his band of outlaws; the debt of gratitude was paid by frequent inroads in the Roman province of Trebizond, and he seldom returned without an ample harvest of spoil and of Christian captives.

His vigilance had eluded or repelled the open and secret persecution of the emperor; but he was at length ensnared by the captivity of his female companion. The governor of Trebizond succeeded in his attempt to surprise the person of Theodora; the queen of Jerusalem and her two children were sent to Constantinople, and their loss embittered the tedious solitude of banishment. The fugitive implored and obtained a final pardon, with leave to throw himself at the feet of his sovereign, who was satisfied with the submission of this haughty spirit. Prostrate on the ground, he deplored with tears and groans the guilt of his past rebellion; nor would he presume to arise unless some faithful subject would drag him to the foot of the throne.

This extraordinary penance excited the wonder and pity of the assembly; his sins were forgiven by the church and state; but the just suspicion of Manuel fixed his residence at a distance from the court, at Œnoe, a town of Pontus, surrounded with rich vineyards, and situate on the coast of the Euxine. The death of Manuel, and the disorders of the minority, soon opened the fairest field to his ambition.

### ALEXIUS II (1180–1183 A.D.)

The emperor was a boy of twelve or fourteen years of age, without vigour, or wisdom, or experience; his mother, the empress Mary, abandoned her person and government to a favourite of the Comnenian name; and his sister, another Mary, whose husband, an Italian, was decorated with the title of Cæsar, excited a conspiracy, and at length an insurrection, against her odious stepmother. The provinces were forgotten, the capital was in flames, and a century of peace and order was overthrown in the vice and weakness of a few months. A civil war was kindled in Constantinople; the two factions fought a bloody battle in the square of the palace, and the rebels sustained a regular siege in the cathedral of St. Sophia. The patriarch laboured with honest zeal to heal the wounds of the republic, the most respectable patriots called aloud for a guardian and avenger, and every tongue repeated the praise of the talents and even the virtues of Andronicus. In his march from Œnoe to Constantinople, his slender train insensibly swelled to a crowd and an army; his professions of religion and loyalty were mistaken for the language of his heart; and the simplicity of a foreign dress, which showed to advantage his majestic stature, displayed a lively image of his poverty and exile. All opposition sank before him; he reached the straits of the Thracian Bosporus; the Byzantine navy sailed from the harbour to receive and transport the saviour of the empire; the torrent was loud and irresistible, and the insects who had basked in the sunshine of royal favour disappeared at the blast of the storm. It was the first care of Andronicus to occupy the palace, to salute the emperor, to confine his mother, to punish her minister, and to restore the public order and tranquillity. He then visited the sepulchre of Manuel; the spectators were ordered to stand aloof, but, as he bowed in the attitude of prayer, they heard a murmur of triumph and revenge.

"I no longer fear thee, my old enemy, who hast driven me a vagabond to every climate of the earth. Thou art safely deposited under a sevenfold dome, from whence thou canst never arise till the signal of the last trumpet. It is now my turn, and speedily will I trample on thy ashes and thy posterity." From his subsequent tyranny we may impute such feelings to the man and the moment. But it is not extremely probable that he gave an articulate sound to his secret thoughts. In the first months of his administration, his designs were veiled by a fair semblance of hypocrisy, which could delude only the eyes of the multitude: the coronation of Alexius was performed with due solemnity, and his perfidious guardian, holding in his hands the body and blood of Christ, most fervently declared, that he lived, and was ready to die, for the service of his beloved pupil. After blackening her reputation, and inflaming against her the passions of the multitude, the tyrant accused and tried the empress for a treasonable correspondence with the king of Hungary. His own son, a youth of honour and humanity, avowed his abhorrence of this flagitious act, and three of the judges had the merit of preferring their conscience to their safety; but the obsequious tribunal, without requiring any proof, or hearing any defence, condemned the widow of Manuel, and her unfortunate son subscribed the sentence of her death. Maria was strangled, her corpse was buried in the sea, and her memory was wounded by the insult most offensive to female vanity, a false and ugly representation of her beauteous form. The fate of her son was not long deferred: he was strangled with a bowstring, and the tyrant, insensible to pity or remorse, after surveying the body of the innocent youth, struck it rudely with his foot.

ANDRONICUS I, EMPEROR (1183–1185 A.D.)

The Roman sceptre, the reward of his crimes, was held by Andronicus about three years and a half, as guardian, then sovereign of the empire. His government exhibited a singular contrast of vice and virtue. When he listened to his passions he was the scourge, when he consulted his reason, the father, of his people. In the exercise of private justice, he was equitable and rigorous; a shameful and pernicious venality was abolished, and the offices were filled with the most deserving candidates by a prince who had sense to choose, and severity to punish. He prohibited the inhuman practice of pillaging the goods and persons of shipwrecked mariners; the provinces, so long the objects of oppression or neglect, revived in prosperity and plenty; and millions applauded the distant blessings of his reign, while he was cursed by the witnesses of his daily cruelties. The ancient proverb, that blood-thirsty is the man who returns from banishment to power, had been applied with too much truth to Marius and Tiberius; and was now verified for the third time in the life of Andronicus. His memory was stored with a black list of the enemies and rivals who had traduced his merit, opposed his greatness, or insulted his misfortunes; and the only comfort of his exile was the sacred hope and promise of revenge. The necessary extinction of the young emperor and his mother imposed the fatal obligation of extirpating the friends, who hated, and might punish, the assassin; and the repetition of murder rendered him less willing, and less able, to forgive.

The noblest of the Greeks, more especially those who, by descent or alliance, might dispute the Comnenian inheritance, escaped from the monster's den; Nicæa or Prusa, Sicily or Cyprus, were their places of refuge; and as their flight was already criminal, they aggravated their offence by an open revolt, and the imperial title. Yet Andronicus resisted the daggers and swords of his most formidable enemies; Nicæa and Prusa were reduced and chastised; the Sicilians were content with the sack of Thessalonica; and the distance of Cyprus was not more propitious to the rebel than to the tyrant. His throne was subverted by a rival without merit, and a people without arms. Isaac Angelus, a descendant in the female line from the great Alexius, was marked as a victim, by the prudence or superstition of the emperor. In a moment of despair, Angelus defended his life and liberty, slew the executioner, and fled to the church of St. Sophia. The sanctuary was insensibly filled with a curious and mournful crowd, who, in his fate, prognosticated their own. But their lamentations were soon turned to curses, and their curses to threats: they dared to ask, "Why do we fear? why do we obey? we are many, and he is one; our patience is the only bond of our slavery." With the dawn of day the city burst into a general sedition, the prisons were thrown open, the coldest and most servile were roused to the defence of their country, and Isaac, the second of the name, was raised from the sanctuary to the throne.

Unconscious of his danger, the tyrant was absent, withdrawn from the toils of state, in the delicious islands of the Propontis. When fear had ceased, obedience was no more; the imperial galley was pursued and taken by an armed brigantine, and the tyrant was dragged to the presence of Isaac Angelus, loaded with fetters, and a long chain round his neck. His eloquence, and the tears of his female companions, pleaded in vain for his life; but, instead of the decencies of a legal execution, the new monarch

[1185-1204 A.D.]

abandoned the criminal to the numerous sufferers whom he had deprived of a father, a husband, or a friend. His teeth and hair, an eye and hand, were torn from him, as a poor compensation for their loss; and a short respite was allowed, that he might feel the bitterness of death. Astride on a camel, without any danger of a rescue, he was carried through the city, and the basest of the populace rejoiced to trample on the fallen majesty of their prince. After a thousand blows and outrages, Andronicus was hung by the feet between two pillars that supported the statues of a wolf and a sow; and every hand that could reach the public enemy inflicted on his body some mark of ingenious or brutal cruelty, till two friendly Italians, plunging their swords into his body, released him from all human punishment. In this long and painful agony, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" and "Why will you bruise a broken reed?" were the only words that escaped from his mouth. Our hatred for the tyrant is lost in pity for the man; nor can we blame his pusillanimous resignation, since a Greek Christian was no longer master of his life.

The branches that sprang from the Comnenian trunk had insensibly withered; and the male line was continued only in the posterity of Androni-

A SARACEN BRASS VESSEL

cus himself, who, in the public confusion, usurped the sovereignty of Trebizond, so obscure in history, and so famous in romance. A private citizen of Philadelphia, Constantine Angelus, had emerged to wealth and honours by his marriage with a daughter of the emperor Alexius. His son Andronicus is conspicuous only by his cowardice. His grandson Isaac punished and succeeded the tyrant; but he was dethroned by his own vices and the ambition of his brother, and their discord introduced the Latins to the conquest of Constantinople, the first great period in the fall of the Eastern Empire.

### GIBBON'S REVIEW OF THE EMPERORS

If we compute the number and duration of the reigns, it will be found that a period of six hundred years is filled by sixty emperors, including in the Augustan list some female sovereigns; and deducting some usurpers who were never acknowledged in the capital, and some princes who did not live to possess their inheritance. The average proportion will allow ten years for each emperor, far below the chronological rule of Sir Isaac Newton, who, from the experience of more recent and regular monarchies, defined about eighteen or twenty years as the term of an ordinary reign. The Byzantine Empire was most tranquil and prosperous when it could acquiesce

in hereditary succession; five dynasties, the Heraclian, Isaurian, Amorian, Basilian, and Comnenian families, enjoyed and transmitted the royal patrimony during their respective series of five, four, three, six, and four generations; several princes number the years of their reign with those of their infancy; and Constantine VII and his two grandsons occupy the space of an entire century. But in the intervals of the Byzantine dynasties, the succession is rapid and broken, and the name of a successful candidate is speedily erased by a more fortunate competitor.

Many were the paths that led to the summit of royalty; the fabric of rebellion was overthrown by the stroke of conspiracy, or undermined by the silent arts of intrigue; the favourites of the soldiers or people, of the senate or clergy, of the women and eunuchs, were alternately clothed with the purple; the means of their elevation were base, and their end was often contemptible or tragic. A being of the nature of man, endowed with the same faculties, but with a longer measure of existence, would cast down a smile of pity and contempt on the crimes and follies of human ambition, so eager, in a narrow span, to grasp at a precarious and short-lived enjoyment.

It is thus that the experience of history exalts and enlarges the horizon of our intellectual view. In a composition of some days, in a perusal of some hours, six hundred years have rolled away, and the duration of a life or reign is contracted to a fleeting moment; the grave is ever beside the throne; the success of a criminal is almost instantly followed by the loss of his prize; and our immortal reason survives and disdains the sixty phantoms of kings who have passed before our eyes, and faintly dwell in our remembrance.

The observation that in every age and climate, ambition has prevailed with the same commanding energy, may abate the surprise of a philosopher; but while he condemns the vanity, he may search the motive, of this universal desire to obtain and hold the sceptre of dominion. To the greater part of the Byzantine series, we cannot reasonably ascribe the love of fame and of mankind. The virtue of Joannes Comnenus alone was beneficent and pure; the most illustrious of the princes, who precede or follow that respectable name, have trod with some dexterity and vigour the crooked and bloody paths of a selfish policy; in scrutinising the imperfect characters of Leo the Isaurian, Basil I, and Alexius Comnenus, of Theophilus, the second Basil, and Manuel Comnenus, our esteem and censure are almost equally balanced; and the remainder of the imperial crowd could only desire and expect to be forgotten by posterity.

Was personal happiness the aim and object of their ambition? I shall not descant on the vulgar topics of the misery of kings; but I may surely observe, that their condition, of all others, is the most pregnant with fear, and the least susceptible of hope. For the opposite passions, a larger scope was allowed in the revolutions of antiquity, than in the smooth and solid temper of the modern world, which cannot easily repeat either the triumph of Alexander or the fall of Darius. But the peculiar infelicity of the Byzantine princes exposed them to domestic perils, without affording any lively promise of foreign conquest. From the pinnacle of greatness, Andronicus was precipitated by a death more cruel and shameful than that of the vilest malefactor; but the most glorious of his predecessors had much more to dread from their subjects than to hope from their enemies. The army was licentious without spirit, the nation turbulent without freedom; the barbarians of the East and West pressed on the monarchy, and the loss of the provinces was terminated by the final servitude of the capital.

[1185–1202 A.D.]

The entire series of Roman emperors, from the first of the Cæsars to the last of the Constantines, extends above fifteen hundred years: and the term of dominion, unbroken by foreign conquest, surpasses the measure of the ancient monarchies; the Assyrians, or Medes, the successors of Cyrus, or those of Alexander.

### ISAAC (II) ANGELUS (1185–1195 A.D.)

Isaac slept on the throne, and was awakened only by the sound of pleasure; his vacant hours were amused by comedians and buffoons, and even to these buffoons the emperor was an object of contempt; his feasts and buildings exceeded the examples of royal luxury; the number of his eunuchs and domestics amounted to twenty thousand; and a daily sum of four thousand pounds of silver would swell to four millions sterling the annual expense of his household and table. His poverty was relieved by oppression; and the public discontent was inflamed by equal abuses in the collection and the application of the revenue. While the Greeks numbered the days of their servitude, a flattering prophet whom he rewarded with the dignity of patriarch, assured him of a long and victorious reign of thirty-two years, during which he should extend his sway to Mount Lebanon, and his conquests beyond the Euphrates. But his only step towards the accomplishment of the prediction was a splendid and scandalous embassy to Saladin, to demand the restitution of the Holy Sepulchre, and to propose an offensive and defensive league with the enemy of the Christian name. In these unworthy hands, of Isaac and his brother, the remains of the Greek Empire crumbled into dust. The island of Cyprus, whose name excites the ideas of elegance and pleasure, was usurped by his namesake, a Comnenian prince; and by a strange concatenation of events, the sword of the English Richard bestowed that kingdom on the house of Lusignan, a rich compensation for the loss of Jerusalem.

The honour of the monarchy, and the safety of the capital, were deeply wounded by the revolt of the Bulgarians and Wallachians. Several candidates for the purple successively rose and fell under the empire of Isaac; a general who had repelled the fleets of Sicily was driven to revolt and ruin by the ingratitude of the prince; and his luxurious repose was disturbed by secret conspiracies and popular insurrections. The emperor was saved by accident, or the merit of his servants; he was at length oppressed by an ambitious brother, who, for the hope of a precarious diadem, forgot the obligations of nature, of loyalty, and of friendship. While Isaac in the Thracian valleys pursued the idle and solitary pleasures of the chase, his brother, Alexius Angelus, was invested with the purple, by the unanimous suffrage of the camp; the capital and the clergy subscribed to their choice; and the vanity of the new sovereign rejected the name of his fathers for the lofty and royal appellation of the Comnenian race. On the despicable character of Isaac we have exhausted the language of contempt; and can only add, that in a reign of eight years, the baser Alexius was supported by the masculine vices of his wife Euphrosyne.

### INTERVENTION OF THE CRUSADERS

The first intelligence of his fall was conveyed to the late emperor by the hostile aspect and pursuit of the guards, no longer his own; he fled before them above fifty miles, as far as Stagira in Macedonia; but the fugitive,

without an object or a follower, was arrested, brought back to Constantinople, deprived of his eyes, and confined in a lonesome tower, on a scanty allowance of bread and water. At the moment of the revolution, his son Alexius, whom he educated in the hope of empire, was twelve years of age. He was spared by the usurper, and reduced to attend his triumph both in peace and war; but as the army was encamped on the sea shore, an Italian vessel facilitated the escape of the royal youth; and, in the disguise of a common sailor, he eluded the search of his enemies, passed the Hellespont, and found a secure refuge in the isle of Sicily. After saluting the threshold of the Apostles, and imploring the protection of Pope Innocent III, Alexius accepted the kind invitation of his sister Irene, the wife of Philip of Swabia, king of the Romans. But in his passage through Italy, he heard that the flower of western chivalry was assembled at Venice for the deliverance of the Holy Land; and a ray of hope was kindled in his bosom, that their invincible swords might be employed in his father's restoration.

A FRANK SOLDIER

He promised, in his own and his father's name, that as soon as they should be seated on the throne of Constantinople, they would terminate the long schism of the Greeks, and submit themselves and their people to the lawful supremacy of the Roman church. He engaged to recompense the labours and merits of the crusaders, by the immediate payment of two hundred thousand marks of silver; to accompany them in person to Egypt; or, if it should be judged more advantageous, to maintain, during a year, ten thousand men, and, during his life, five hundred knights, for the service of the Holy Land. These tempting conditions were accepted by the republic of Venice; and the eloquence of the doge and marquis persuaded the counts of Flanders, Blois, and St. Pol, with eight barons of France, to join in the glorious enterprise.

The departure of the fleet and army was vigorously pressed by the Venetians, whose zeal for the service of the royal youth concealed a just resentment to his nation and family. They were mortified by the recent preference which had been given to Pisa, the rival of their trade; they had a long arrear of debt and injury to liquidate with the Byzantine court; and Dandolo might not discourage the popular tale, that he had been deprived of his eyes by the emperor Manuel, who perfidiously violated the sanctity of an ambassador. A similar armament, for ages, had not ridden the Adriatic; it was composed of 120 flat-bottomed vessels or palanders for the horses; 240 transports filled with men and arms; 70 store-ships laden with provisions; and 50 stout galleys, well prepared for the encounter of an enemy.

At Durazzo, the confederates first landed on the territories of the Greek Empire; the isle of Corfu afforded a station and repose; they doubled with-

[1202-1203 A.D.]

out accident the perilous cape of Malea, the southern point of Peloponnesus or the Morea; made a descent in the islands of Negropont and Andros; and cast anchor at Abydos on the Asiatic side of the Hellespont. These preludes of conquest were easy and bloodless; the Greeks of the provinces, without patriotism or courage, were crushed by an irresistible force; the presence of the lawful heir might justify their obedience; and it was rewarded by the modesty and discipline of the Latins.

The tower of Galata, in the suburb of Pera, was attacked and stormed by the French, while the Venetians assumed the more difficult task of forcing the boom, or chain, that was stretched from that tower to the Byzantine shore. After some fruitless attempts, their intrepid perseverance prevailed; twenty ships of war, the relics of the Grecian navy, were either sunk or taken; the enormous and massy links of iron were cut asunder by the shears, or broken by the weight, of the galleys; and the Venetian fleet, safe and triumphant, rode at anchor in the port of Constantinople. By these daring achievements, a remnant of twenty thousand Latins solicited the license of besieging a capital which contained above four hundred thousand inhabitants, able, though not willing, to bear arms in the defence of their country. Such an account would indeed suppose a population of near two millions; but whatever abatement may be required in the numbers of the Greeks, the belief of those numbers will equally exalt the fearless spirit of their assailants.

### THE CAPTURE OF CONSTANTINOPLE (1203 A.D.)

The trembling usurper was supported by Theodore Lascaris, his son-in-law, a valiant youth, who aspired to save and to rule his country; the Greeks, regardless of that country, were awakened to the defence of their religion; but their firmest hope was in the strength and spirit of the Varangian guards, of the Danes and English, as they are named in the writers of the times. After ten days' incessant labour, the ground was levelled, the ditch filled, the approaches of the besiegers were regularly made, and 250 engines of assault exercised their various powers to clear the rampart, to batter the walls, and to sap the foundations. On the first appearance of a breach, the scaling-ladders were applied, the numbers that defended the vantage ground repulsed and oppressed the adventurous Latins; but they admired the resolution of fifteen knights and sergeants, who had gained the ascent, and maintained their perilous station till they were precipitated or made prisoners by the imperial guards.

On the side of the harbour, the naval attack was more successfully conducted by the Venetians; and that industrious people employed every resource that was known and practised before the invention of gunpowder. A double line, three bow-shots in front, was formed by the galleys and ships; and the swift motion of the former was supported by the weight and loftiness of the latter, whose decks, and poops, and turret were the platforms of military engines, that discharged their shot over the heads of the first line. The soldiers, who leaped from the galleys on shore, immediately planted and ascended their scaling-ladders, while the large ships, advancing more slowly into the intervals, and lowering a drawbridge, opened a way through the air from their masts to the rampart. In the midst of the conflict, the doge, a venerable and conspicuous form, stood aloft in complete armour on the prow of his galley. The great standard of St. Mark was displayed before him; his threats, promises, and exhortations urged the

diligence of the rowers; his vessel was the first that struck; and Dandolo was the first warrior on the shore.

The nations admired the magnanimity of the blind old man, without reflecting that his age and infirmities diminished the price of life, and enhanced the value of immortal glory. On a sudden, by an invisible hand (for the standard-bearer was probably slain), the banner of the republic was fixed on the rampart; twenty-five towers were rapidly occupied; and, by the cruel expedient of fire, the Greeks were driven from the adjacent quarter. The doge had despatched the intelligence of his success, when he was checked by the danger of his confederates. Nobly declaring that he would rather die with the pilgrims than gain a victory by their destruction, Dandolo relinquished his advantage, recalled his troops, and hastened to the scene of action. He found the six weary diminutive battles of the French encompassed by sixty squadrons of the Greek cavalry, the least of which was more numerous than the largest of their divisions.

Shame and despair had provoked Alexius to the last effort of a general sally; but he was awed by the firm order and manly aspect of the Latins; and, after skirmishing at a distance, withdrew his troops in the close of the evening. The silence or tumult of the night exasperated his fears; and the timid usurper, collecting a treasure of ten thousand pounds of gold, basely deserted his wife, his people, and his fortune, threw himself into a bark, stole through the Bosporus, and landed in shameful safety in an obscure harbour of Thrace. As soon as they were apprised of his flight, the Greek nobles sought pardon and peace in the dungeon where the blind Isaac expected each hour the visit of the executioner. Again saved and exalted by the vicissitudes of fortune, the captive, in his imperial robes, was replaced on the throne, and surrounded with prostrate slaves, whose real terror and affected joy he was incapable of discerning. At the dawn of day, hostilities were suspended; and the Latin chiefs were surprised by a message from the lawful and reigning emperor, who was impatient to embrace his son, and to reward his generous deliverers.

But these generous deliverers were unwilling to release their hostage till they had obtained from his father the payment, or at least the promise, of their recompense. The father of young Alexius inquired with some anxiety into the nature of his stipulations. The submission of the Eastern Empire to the Pope, the succour of the Holy Land, and a present contribution of two hundred thousand marks of silver — "These conditions are weighty," was his prudent reply; "they are hard to accept, and difficult to perform. But no conditions can exceed the measure of your services and deserts."

After this satisfactory assurance, the barons mounted on horseback, and introduced the heir of Constantinople to the city and palace. His youth and marvellous adventures engaged every heart in his favour, and Alexius was solemnly crowned with his father in the dome of St. Sophia. At the price of sixteen hundred pounds of gold, he prevailed on the marquis of Montferrat to lead him with an army round the provinces of Europe; to establish his authority, and pursue his uncle, while Constantinople was awed by the presence of Baldwin, and his confederates of France and Flanders. The expedition was successful. The blind old emperor exulted in the success of his arms, and listened to the predictions of his flatterers, that the same Providence which had raised him from the dungeon to the throne, would heal his gout, restore his sight, and watch over the long prosperity of his reign.

[1203–1204 A.D.]

By the recent invasion, the Greeks were awakened from a dream of nine centuries; from the vain presumption that the capital of the Roman Empire was impregnable to foreign arms. The strangers of the West had violated the city, and bestowed the sceptre of Constantine; their imperial clients soon became as unpopular as themselves; the well-known vices of Isaac were rendered still more contemptible by his infirmities, and the young Alexius was hated as an apostate, who had renounced the manners and religion of his country. His secret covenant with the Latins was divulged or suspected; the people, and especially the clergy, were devoutly attached to their faith and superstition; and every convent, and every shop, resounded with the danger of the church and the tyranny of the pope. An empty treasury could ill supply the demands of regal luxury and foreign extortion; the Greeks refused to avert, by a general tax, the impending evils of servitude and pillage; the oppression of the rich excited a more dangerous and personal resentment; and if the emperor melted the plate, and despoiled the images, of the sanctuary, he seemed to justify the complaints of heresy and sacrilege.

Alexius hesitated between gratitude and patriotism, between the fear of his subjects and of his allies. By his feeble and fluctuating conduct he lost the esteem and confidence of both; and while he invited the marquis of Montferrat to occupy the palace, he suffered the nobles to conspire, and the people to arm, for the deliverance of their country. Regardless of his painful situation, the Latin chiefs repeated their demands, resented his delays, suspected his intentions, and exacted a decisive answer of peace or war.

In the eyes of both nations Alexius was false and contemptible; the base and spurious race of the Angeli was rejected with clamorous disdain; and the people of Constantinople encompassed the senate, to demand at their hands a more worthy emperor. To every senator, conspicuous by his birth or dignity, they successively presented the purple; by each senator the deadly garment was repulsed; the contest lasted three days; and we may learn from the historian Nicetas, one of the members of the assembly, that fear and weakness were the guardians of their loyalty. A phantom, who vanished in oblivion, was forcibly proclaimed by the crowd; but the author of the tumult, and the leader of the war, was a prince of the house of Ducas; and his common appellation of Alexius must be discriminated by the epithet of Mourzoufle, which in the vulgar idiom expressed the close junction of his black and shaggy eyebrows.

At once a patriot and a courtier, the perfidious Mourzoufle, who was not destitute of cunning and courage, opposed the Latins both in speech and action, inflamed the passions and prejudices of the Greeks, and insinuated himself into the favour and confidence of Alexius, who trusted him with the office of great chamberlain, and tinged his buskins with the colours of royalty. At the dead of night he rushed into the bedchamber with an affrighted aspect, exclaiming, that the palace was attacked by the people and betrayed by the guards. Starting from his couch, the unsuspecting prince threw himself into the arms of his enemy, who had contrived his escape by a private staircase. But that staircase terminated in a prison; Alexius was seized, stripped, and loaded with chains; and, after tasting some days the bitterness of death, he was poisoned, or strangled, or beaten with clubs, at the command and in the presence of the tyrant. The emperor, Isaac Angelus, soon followed his son to the grave, and Mourzoufle, perhaps, might spare the superfluous crime of hastening the extinction of impotence and blindness.

SECOND CAPTURE, AND SACK OF THE CITY (1204 A.D.)

The death of the emperors, and the usurpation of Mourzoufle, had changed the nature of the quarrel. It was no longer the disagreement of allies who over-valued their services, or neglected their obligations; the French and Venetians forgot their complaints against Alexius, dropped a tear on the untimely fate of their companion, and swore revenge against the perfidious nation who had crowned his assassin. Near three months, without excepting the holy season of Lent, were consumed in skirmishes and preparations before the Latins were ready or resolved for a general assault.

In more than a hundred places the assault was urged, and the defence was sustained, till the superiority of ground and numbers finally prevailed, and the Latin trumpets sounded a retreat. On the ensuing days, the attack was renewed with equal vigour, and a similar event. In the third assault, two ships were linked together to double their strength; a strong north wind drove them on the shore; the bishops of Troyes[1] and Soissons[2] led the van; and the auspicious names of the *Pilgrim* and the *Paradise* resounded along the line. The episcopal banners were displayed on the walls; a hundred marks of silver had been promised to the first adventurers; and if their reward was intercepted by death, their names have been immortalised by fame. Four towers were scaled, three gates were burst open, and the French knights, who might tremble on the waves, felt themselves invincible on horseback on the solid ground. Shall we relate that the thousands who guarded the emperor's person fled on the approach, and before the lance, of a single warrior? Their ignominious flight is attested by their countryman Nicetas*i*—an army of phantoms marched with the French hero, and he was magnified to a giant in the eyes of the Greeks. The Latins entered the city under the banners of their leaders; the streets and gates opened for their passage; and either design or accident kindled a third conflagration, which consumed in a few hours the measure of three of the largest cities of France.

Constantinople had been taken by storm; and no restraints, except those of religion and humanity, were imposed on the conquerors by the laws of war. Boniface, marquis of Montferrat, still acted as their general; and the Greeks, who revered his name as that of their future sovereign, were heard to exclaim in a lamentable tone, "Holy marquis-king, have mercy upon us!" His prudence or compassion opened the gates of the city to the fugitives; and he exhorted the soldiers of the cross to spare the lives of their fellow-Christians. The streams of blood that flow down the pages of Nicetas may be reduced to the slaughter of two thousand of his unresisting countrymen; and the greater part was massacred, not by the strangers, but by the Latins, who had been driven from the city, and who exercised the revenge of a triumphant faction. Yet of these exiles some were less mindful of injuries than of benefits; and Nicetas himself was indebted for his safety to the generosity of a Venetian merchant.

Pope Innocent III accuses the pilgrims of respecting, in their lust, neither age, nor sex, nor religious profession; and bitterly laments that the deeds of darkness, fornication, adultery, and incest were perpetrated in open day; and that noble matrons and holy nuns were polluted by the grooms and peasants of the Catholic camp. It is indeed probable that the license of victory prompted and covered a multitude of sins; but it is certain, that the

[1 The Roman Augustobona, afterwards Tricassæ.]
[2 The Roman Augusta Suessonum.]

[1204 A.D.]

capital of the East contained a stock of venal or willing beauty sufficient to satiate the desires of twenty thousand pilgrims; and female prisoners were no longer subject to the right or abuse of domestic slavery. The marquis of Montferrat was the patron of discipline and decency; the count of Flanders was the mirror of chastity; they had forbidden, under pain of death, the rape of married women, or virgins, or nuns; and the proclamation was sometimes invoked by the vanquished and respected by the victors. Their cruelty and lust were moderated by the authority of the chiefs and feelings of the soldiers; for we are no longer describing an irruption of the northern savages; and, however ferocious they might still appear, time, policy, and religion had civilised the manners of the French, and still more of the Italians. But a free scope was allowed to their avarice, which was glutted, even in the holy week, by the pillage of Constantinople.

RUINS OF A SARACEN TOWER

The right of victory, unshackled by any promise or treaty, had confiscated the public and private wealth of the Greeks; and every hand, according to its size and strength, might lawfully execute the sentence and seize the forfeiture. A portable and universal standard of exchange was found in the coined and uncoined metals of gold and silver, which each captor at home or abroad might convert into the possessions most suitable to his temper and situation. Of the treasures which trade and luxury had accumulated, the silks, velvets, furs, the gems, spices, and rich movables, were the most precious, as they could not be procured for money, in the ruder countries of Europe. An order of rapine was instituted; nor was the share of each individual abandoned to industry or chance. Under the tremendous penalties of perjury, excommunication, and death, the Latins were bound to deliver their plunder into the common stock; three churches were selected for the deposit and distribution of the spoil; a single share was allotted to a foot-soldier; two for a sergeant on horseback; four to a knight; and larger proportions according to the rank and merit of the barons and princes. For violating this sacred engagement, a knight belonging to the count of St. Pol was hanged with his shield and coat of arms round his neck; his example might render similar offenders more artful and discreet; but avarice was more powerful than fear; and it is generally believed that the secret far exceeded the acknowledged plunder. Yet the magnitude of the prize sur-

passed the largest scale of experience or expectation. After the whole had been equally divided between the French and Venetians, fifty thousand marks were deducted to satisfy the debts of the former and the demands of the latter. The residue of the French amounted to four hundred thousand marks of silver [about £800,000 or $4,000,000].

In this great revolution we enjoy the singular felicity of comparing the narratives of Villehardouin and Nicetas, the opposite feelings of the marshal of Champagne and the Byzantine senator. At the first view it should seem that the wealth of Constantinople was only transferred from one nation to another; and that the loss and sorrow of the Greeks are exactly balanced by the joy and advantage of the Latins. But in the miserable account of war, the gain is never equivalent to the loss, the pleasure to the pain; the smiles of the Latins were transient and fallacious; the Greeks forever wept over the ruins of their country; and their real calamities were aggravated by sacrilege and mockery. What benefits accrued to the conquerors from the three fires which annihilated so vast a portion of the buildings and riches of the city? What a stock of such things, as could neither be used nor transported, was maliciously or wantonly destroyed! How much treasure was idly wasted in gaming, debauchery, and riot! And what precious objects were bartered for a vile price by the impatience or ignorance of the soldiers, whose reward was stolen by the base industry of the last of the Greeks!

These alone, who had nothing to lose, might derive some profit from the revolution; but the misery of the upper ranks of society is strongly painted in the personal adventures of Nicetas himself. His stately palace had been reduced to ashes in the second conflagration; and the senator, with his family and friends, found an obscure shelter in another house which he possessed near the church of St. Sophia. It was the door of this mean habitation that his friend the Venetian guarded in the disguise of a soldier, till Nicetas could save, by a precipitate flight, the relics of his fortune and the chastity of his daughter. In a cold wintry season, these fugitives, nursed in the lap of prosperity, departed on foot; his wife was with child; the desertion of their slaves compelled them to carry their baggage on their own shoulders; and their women, whom they placed in the centre, were exhorted to conceal their beauty with dirt, instead of adorning it with paint and jewels.

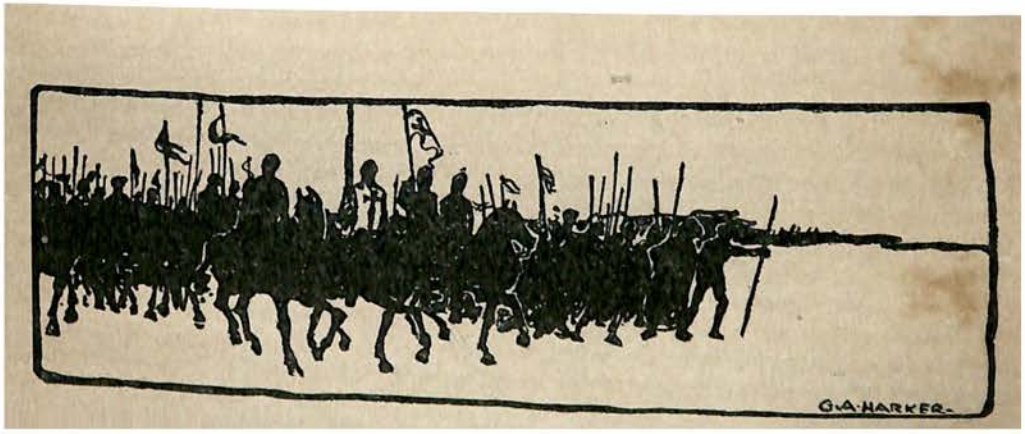
Every step was exposed to insult and danger; the threats of the strangers were less painful than the taunts of the plebeians, with whom they were now levelled; nor did the exiles breathe in safety till their mournful pilgrimage was concluded at Selymbria, above forty miles from the capital. On their way they overtook the patriarch, without attendance, and almost without apparel, riding on an ass, and reduced to a state of apostolic poverty, which, had it been voluntary, might perhaps have been meritorious. In the meanwhile, his desolate churches were profaned by the licentiousness and party zeal of the Latins. After stripping the gems and pearls, they converted the chalices into drinking cups; their tables, on which they gamed and feasted, were covered with the pictures of Christ and the saints; and they trampled under foot the most venerable objects of the Christian worship. In the cathedral of St. Sophia, the ample veil of the sanctuary was rent asunder for the sake of the golden fringe; and the altar, a monument of art and riches, was broken in pieces and shared among the captors.

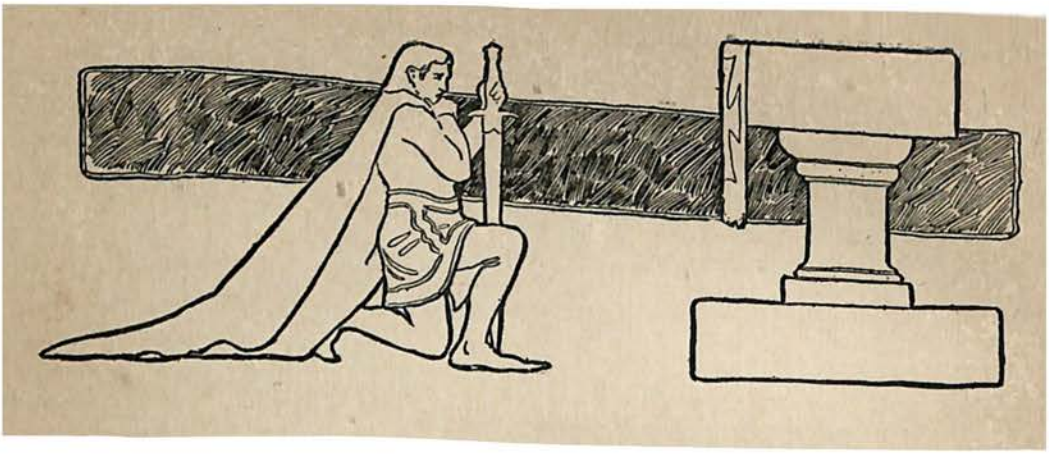
Their mules and horses were laden with the wrought silver and gilt carvings which they tore down from the doors and pulpit; and if the

[1204 A.D.]

beasts stumbled under the burden, they were stabbed by their impatient drivers, and the holy pavement streamed with their impure blood. A prostitute was seated on the throne of the patriarch; and that daughter of Belial, as she is styled, sang and danced in the church, to ridicule the hymns and processions of the Orientals. Nor were the repositories of the royal dead secure from violation; in the church of the Apostles, the tombs of the emperors were rifled; and it is said, that after six centuries the corpse of Justinian was found without any sign of decay or putrefaction. In the streets the French and Flemings clothed themselves and their horses in painted robes and flowing head-dresses of linen; and the coarse intemperance of their feasts insulted the splendid sobriety of the East. To expose the arms of a people of scribes and scholars, they affected to display a pen, an inkhorn, and a sheet of paper, without discerning that the instruments of science and valour were useless in the hands of the modern Greeks.

Their reputation and their language encouraged them, however, to despise the ignorance, and to overlook the progress of the Latins. In the love of the arts, the national difference was still more obvious and real; the Greeks preserved with reverence the works of their ancestors, which they could not imitate; and, in the destruction of the statues of Constantinople, we are provoked to join in the complaints and invectives of the Byzantine historian. The brass statues were broken and melted by the unfeeling avarice of the crusaders; the cost and labour were consumed in a moment; the soul of genius evaporated in smoke; and the remnant of base metal was coined into money for the payment of the troops. Bronze is not the most durable of monuments; from the marble forms of Phidias and Praxiteles, the Latins might turn aside with stupid contempt; but unless they were crushed by some accidental injury, those useless stones stood secure on their pedestals. The most enlightened of the strangers, above the gross and sensual pursuits of their countrymen, more piously exercised the right of conquest in the search and seizure of the relics of the saints.[h]





# CHAPTER IX. THE LATIN EMPIRE

[1204–1261 A.D.]

AFTER the festival of Easter, the crusaders shared the captured riches; the fourth part of the spoil was set aside for him who should be chosen emperor, and the rest was divided among the French and the Venetians. The French crusaders, who had conquered Zara, to the sole advantage of the Venetians, were not the less called upon to pay the fifty thousand silver marks they owed to the republic; the amount was deducted beforehand from the portion of the booty that belonged to them. In the division that was made among the warriors of Lombardy, Germany, and France, each knight had a part equal to that of two horsemen, and every horseman one equal to that of two foot-soldiers. All the plunder of the Greeks yielded[1] only 400,000 silver marks; but although this sum far exceeded the revenues of all the kingdoms of the West, it did not by any means represent the value of the riches accumulated in Byzantium. If the princes and barons, upon making themselves masters of the city, had been satisfied with imposing a tribute upon the inhabitants, they might have received a much larger sum.

When they had shared the plunder, the crusaders gave way to the most extravagant joy, without perceiving that they had committed a great fault in exhausting a country which was about to become their own; they did not reflect that the ruin of the conquered might one day bring on that of the conquerors, and that they might become as poor as the Greeks they had just despoiled. Without regrets, as without foresight, hoping everything from their own good swords, they set about electing a leader who should reign over a people in mourning and a desolated city. The imperial purple had still the same splendour in their eyes, and the throne, though shaken by their arms, was still the object of their ambition.

[1] One edition of Villehardouin[b] makes the plunder of Constantinople amount to 500,000 silver marks, equivalent to 24,000,000 francs; if we add to this sum the 50,000 marks due to the Venetians, and deducted before the division, and the part which they had in the division itself, we shall find the total amount of booty 50,400,000 francs [about £2,100,000, or $10,500,000]. As much, says the modern historian who supplies us with this note, perhaps, was appropriated secretly by individuals. The three fires which had consumed more than half the city had destroyed at least as much of its riches, and in the profusion that followed the pillage, the most precious effects had lost so much of their value, that the advantage of the Latins probably was not equivalent to a quarter of what they had cost the Greeks. Thus we may suppose that Constantinople, before the attack, contained 600,000,000 francs of wealth [£25,000,000 or $125,000,000].

[1204 A.D.]

### THE ELECTION OF AN EMPEROR

Six electors were chosen from among the Venetian nobles, and six others from among the French ecclesiastics, to give a master to Constantinople; the twelve electors assembled in the palace of Bukoleon, and swore, upon the Gospel, to crown only merit and virtue.

Three of the principal leaders of the Crusade had equal claims to the suffrages of the electors. If the purple was to be the reward of experience, of ability in council, and of services rendered to the cause of the Latins, Henry Dandolo, who had been the moving spirit, the very soul of the enterprise, certainly had the first claim to it. The marquis of Montferrat, likewise, had titles worthy of great consideration; the Latins had chosen him for their leader, and the Greeks already acknowledged him as their master. His bravery, proved in a thousand fights, promised a firm and generous support to a throne that must rise from amidst ruins. His prudence and moderation might give the Latins and the people of Greece reason to hope that, when once raised to empire, he would repair the evils of war. The claims of Baldwin to the imperial crown were not less cogent than those of his concurrents. The count of Flanders was related to the most powerful monarchs of the West, and was descended, in the female line, from Charlemagne. He was much beloved by his soldiers, whose dangers he was always ready to share; he had deservedly obtained the esteem of the Greeks, who, even amidst the disorders of conquest, celebrated him as the champion of chastity and honour. Baldwin was the protector of the weak, the friend of the poor; he loved justice, and had no dread of truth.

The electors at first turned their attention towards the venerable Dandolo; but the republicans of Venice trembled at the idea of seeing an emperor among their fellow-citizens: "What shall we not have to dread," said they, "from a Venetian, become master of Greece, and of part of the East? Shall we be subject to his laws, or will he remain subject to the laws of our country? Under his reign, and under that of his successors, who will assure us that Venice, the Queen of the Seas, will not become one of the cities of this empire?" The Venetians, whilst speaking thus, bestowed just eulogiums upon the virtue and character of Dandolo; they added, that their doge, who was approaching the end of a life filled with great actions, had nothing left him but to finish his days with glory, and that he himself would find it more glorious to be the head of a victorious republic, than the sovereign of a conquered nation. "What Roman," cried they, "would have been willing to lay down the title of citizen of Rome, to become king of Carthage?"

On terminating their speeches, the Venetians conjured the assembly to elect an emperor from among the other leaders of the army. After this, the choice of the electors could only be directed towards the count of Flanders and the marquis of Montferrat. To prevent the effects of a fatal discord, it was judged best to decree, at once, that the prince that should gain the suffrages for the imperial throne, should yield to the other, under the condition of fealty and homage, the property of the island of Candia, and all the lands of the empire situated on the other side of the Bosporus. After this decision the assembly turned their whole attention to the election of an emperor. Their choice was for a long time uncertain. The marquis of Montferrat at first appeared to have the majority of the suffrages; but the Venetians were fearful of seeing upon the throne of Constantinople a prince who had any possessions in the neighbourhood of their territories. The

interests and jealousies of policy, and, without doubt, also wisdom and equity, at length united all voices in favour of the count of Flanders.

The crusaders, assembled before the palace of Bukoleon, awaited with impatience the decision of the electors. At the hour of midnight, the bishop of Soissons came forward under the vestibule, and pronounced, in a loud voice, these words: "This hour of the night, which witnessed the birth of a Saviour of the world, gives birth to a new empire, under the protection of the Omnipotent. You have for emperor, Baldwin, count of Flanders and Hainault." Loud cries of joy arose from among the Venetians and the French. The people of Constantinople, who had so often changed masters, received, without repugnance, the new one just given to them, and mingled their acclamations with those of the Latins. Baldwin was elevated upon a buckler, and borne in triumph to the church of St. Sophia. The marquis of Montferrat followed in the train of his rival; the generous submission, of which he presented an example, was much admired by his companions in arms, and his presence drew scarcely less attention than the warlike pomp that surrounded the new emperor.

### BALDWIN CROWNED

The ceremony of the coronation was postponed till the fourth Sunday after Easter. In the meantime the marriage of the marquis of Montferrat with Margaret of Hungary, the widow of Isaac, was celebrated with much splendour. Constantinople beheld within its walls the festivities and spectacles of the West, and, for the first time, the Greeks heard in their churches the prayers and hymns of the Latins. On the day appointed for the coronation of the emperor, Baldwin repaired to St. Sophia, accompanied by the barons and the clergy. Whilst divine service was being performed, the emperor ascended a throne of gold, and received the purple from the hands of the pope's legate, who performed the functions of patriarch. Two knights carried before him the *laticlavici tunica* of the Roman consuls, and the imperial sword, once again in the hands of warriors and heroes. The head of the clergy, standing before the altar, pronounced, in the Greek language, these words: "He is worthy of reigning;" and all persons present repeated in chorus, "He is worthy! he is worthy!" The crusaders shouting their boisterous acclamations, the knights clad in armour, the crowd of miserable Greeks, the sanctuary despoiled of its ancient ornaments, and decked with foreign pomp, presented altogether a spectacle solemn and melancholy — all the evils of war amidst the trophies of victory. Surrounded by the ruins of an empire, reflective spectators could not fail to remark among the ceremonies of this day, that in which, according to the custom of the Greeks, were presented to Baldwin a little vase filled with dust and bones, and a lock of lighted flax, as symbols of the shortness of life and the nothingness of human grandeur.

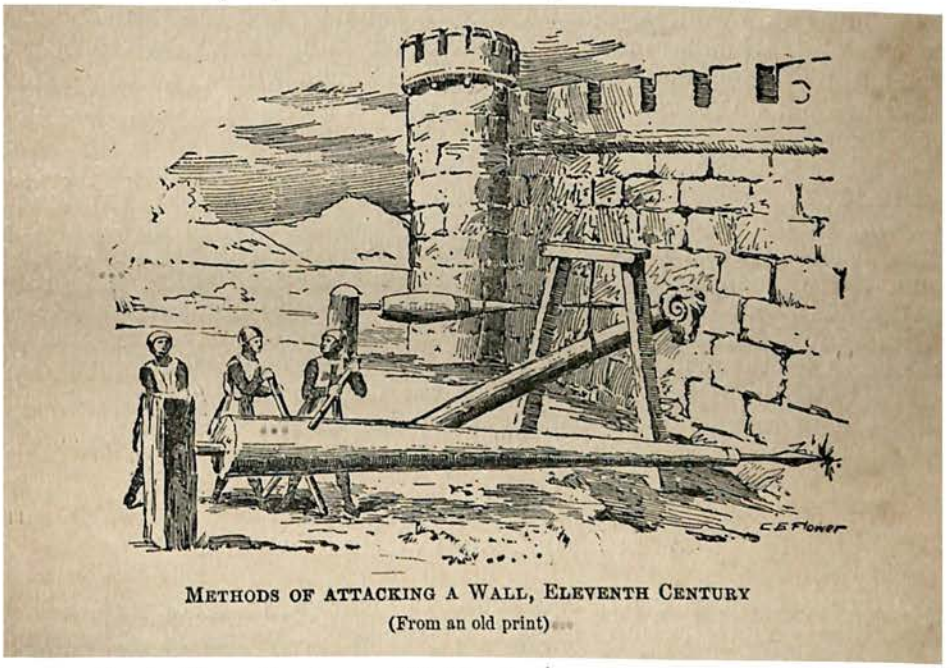
Before the ceremony of his coronation, the new emperor distributed the principal dignities of the empire among his companions in arms. Villehardouin, marshal of Champagne, obtained the title of marshal of Romania; the count de St. Pol, the dignity of constable; the charges of master of the wardrobe, great cupbearer and butler, were given to Canon de Bethune, Macaire de St. Ménéhoult, and Miles de Brabant. The doge of Venice created despot or prince of Romania, had the right of wearing purple buskins, a privilege, among the Greeks, reserved for members of the imperial family.

[1204 A.D.]

Henry Dandolo represented the republic of Venice at Constantinople; half the city was under his dominion and recognised his laws; he raised himself, by the dignity of his character as well as by his exploits, above all the princes and all the nobles of the court of Baldwin; he alone was exempt from paying fealty and homage to the emperor for the lands he was to possess.

### DIVISION OF THE TERRITORY

The barons began to be impatient to share the cities and provinces of the empire. In a council composed of twelve of the patricians of Venice and twelve French knights, all the conquered lands were divided between the two nations. Bithynia, Romania or Thrace, Thessalonica, all Greece from



METHODS OF ATTACKING A WALL, ELEVENTH CENTURY
(From an old print)

Thermopylæ to Cape Sunium, with the larger isles of the Archipelago, fell to the share and under the dominion of the French. The Venetians obtained the Cyclades and the Sporades in the Archipelago; the isles and the oriental coast of the Adriatic Gulf; the coasts of the Propontis and the Euxine Sea; the banks of the Hebrus and the Vardas; the cities of Cypsedes, Didymatica, and Hadrianopolis; the maritime countries of Thessalonica, etc. Such was at first the distribution of the territories of the empire. But circumstances that could not be foreseen, the diversity of interests, the rivalries of ambition, all the chances of fortune and of war, soon produced great changes in this division of dominions. History would in vain endeavour to follow the conquerors into the provinces allotted to them; it would be more easy to mark the banks of an overflowing torrent, or to trace the path of the storm, than to fix the state of the uncertain and transitory possessions of the conquerors of Byzantium.

The lands situated beyond the Bosporus were erected into a kingdom, and, with the island of Candia, given to the marquis of Montferrat. Boniface exchanged them for the province of Thessalonica, and sold the island of

Candia to the republic of Venice for thirty pounds weight of gold. The provinces of Asia were abandoned to the count of Blois, who assumed the title of duke of Nicæa and Bithynia. In the distribution of the cities and lands of the empire, every one of the lords and barons had obtained domains proportionate with the rank and services of the new possessor. When they heard speak of so many countries of which they scarcely knew the names, the warriors of the West were astonished at their conquests, and believed that the greater part of the universe was promised to their ambition. In the intoxication of their joy, they declared themselves masters of all the provinces that had formed the empire of Constantine. They cast lots for the countries of the Medes and Parthians, and the kingdoms that were under the domination of the Turks and Saracens. With the money which arose from the plunder of the capital, the conquerors purchased the provinces of the empire; they sold, they played at dice, for whole cities and their inhabitants. Constantinople was during several days a market, in which seas and their islands, nations and their wealth, were trafficked for; in which the Roman world was put up to sale, and found purchasers among the obscure crowd of the crusaders.

Whilst the barons were thus distributing cities and kingdoms, the ambition of the Latin clergy was by no means idle, but was busy in invading the property of the Greek church. The leaders of the Crusade had agreed among themselves that if the emperor of Constantinople should be chosen from the French, the patriarch should be a Venetian. According to this convention, which had preceded the conquest, Thomas Morosini was elevated to the chair of St. Sophia; priests and Latin bishops were, at the same time, sent into the other conquered cities, and took possession of the wealth and the privileges of the Greek clergy. Thus the Romish worship associated itself with the victories of the crusaders, and made its empire acknowledged wherever the banners of the conquerors floated.

### THE POPE ACKNOWLEDGED

After his coronation, Baldwin wrote to the pope, to announce to him the extraordinary victories by which it had pleased God to crown the zeal of the soldiers of the cross. The new emperor, who assumed the title of knight of the holy see, recalled to the mind of the sovereign pontiff the perfidies and the long revolt of the Greeks. "We have brought under your laws," said he, "that city, which, in hatred for the holy see, would scarcely hear the name of the prince of the apostles, and did not afford a single church to him who received from the Lord the supremacy over all churches." Baldwin, in his letter, invited the vicar of Jesus Christ to imitate the example of his predecessors, John, Agapetus, and Leo, who visited in person the church of Byzantium.

The marquis of Montferrat at the same time addressed a letter to the sovereign pontiff, in which he protested his humble obedience to all the decisions of the holy see. The doge of Venice, who till that time had braved with so much haughtiness the threats and thunders of the church, acknowledged the sovereign authority of the pope, and joined his protestations with those of Baldwin and Boniface. To disarm the anger of Innocent, they represented to him that the conquest of Constantinople had prepared the deliverance of Jerusalem, and boasted of the wealth of a country which the crusaders had at length brought under the laws of the holy see. In all

[1204 A.D.]

their letters to the pope or the faithful of the West, the conquerors of Byzantium spoke of the Greek empire as of a new land of promise, which awaited the servants of God and the soldiers of Christ.

Innocent had been for a long time irritated by the disobedience of the crusaders; in his reply, he reproached with bitterness the victorious army of the Latins for having preferred the riches of the earth to those of heaven; he reprimanded the leaders for having exposed to the outrages of the soldiers and followers of the army, the honour of matrons and maidens, and virgins consecrated to the Lord; for having ruined Constantinople, plundered both great and small, violated the sanctuary, and put forth a sacrilegious hand upon the treasures of the churches. Notwithstanding this outward show of anger, the pope approved the election of Baldwin, who took the title of knight of the holy see, and consented to recognise an empire to which he was to give laws.

The greater part of the defenders of the Holy Land, who had experienced nothing but the evils of war, became desirous of partaking of the glory and the good fortune of the French and Venetians, and the king of Jerusalem was left almost alone at Ptolemais, without means of making the truce he had entered into with the infidels respected. Baldwin warmly welcomed the defenders of the Holy Land; but the joy he experienced at their arrival was much troubled by the intelligence of the death of his wife, Marguerite of Flanders. This princess had embarked in the fleet of John de Nesle, in the belief that she should meet her husband in Palestine; sinking under the fatigue of a long voyage, and perhaps the pains of disappointment, she fell sick at Ptolemais, and died at the moment she learned that Baldwin had been crowned emperor of Constantinople. The vessel destined to convey the new empress to the shores of the Bosporus only brought back her mortal remains. Baldwin, amidst his knights, wept for the loss of a princess he had loved tenderly.

The emperor and his barons, with all the succours they had received from the East, had scarcely twenty thousand men to defend their conquests and restrain the people of the capital and the provinces. The sultan of Iconium and the king of the Bulgarians had long threatened to invade the lands contiguous to their states, and they thought that the dissensions and subsequent fall of the Greek empire presented a favourable opportunity for the outbreak of their jealousy and ambition. The nations of Greece were conquered without being subdued. As in the disorder which accompanied the conquest of Byzantium, no other right had been acknowledged but that of force and the sword; all the Greeks, who had still arms in their hands, were desirous of forming a principality or a kingdom. On all sides new states and empires sprang up from the bosom of the ruins, and already threatened that which the crusaders had so recently established.

### FATE OF THE ROYAL FUGITIVES

A grandson of Andronicus founded in a Greek province of Asia Minor the principality of Trebizond; Leo Sgurre, master of the little city of Napoli, had extended his dominions by injustice and violence; and, to employ a comparison offered by Nicetas, he had grown greater, like the torrent that swells in the storm and is enlarged by the waters of the tempest. A barbarous conqueror, a fierce and cruel tyrant, he reigned, or rather he spread terror, over Argos and the Isthmus of Corinth. Michael-Angelus Comnenus,

employing the arms of treachery, gained the kingdom of Epirus, and subdued to his laws a wild and warlike people. Theodore Lascaris, who, like Æneas, had fled from his burning country, collected some troops in Bithynia, and caused himself to be proclaimed emperor at Nicæa, whence his family was destined at a future day to return in triumph to Constantinople.

If despair had imparted any degree of courage to the two fugitive emperors, they might have obtained a share of their own spoils, and preserved a remnant of power; but they had not profited by the lessons of misfortune. Mourzoufle, who had completed all the crimes begun by Alexius, did not hesitate to place himself in the power of his unfortunate rival, whose daughter he had married; the wicked sometimes take upon themselves the duty of punishing one another. Alexius, after having loaded Mourzoufle with caresses, inveigled him into his house, and caused his eyes to be put out. In this condition, Mourzoufle, abandoned by his followers, for whom he was now nothing but an object of disgust, went to conceal his existence and his misery in Asia; but on his road he fell into the hands of the Latins. Being led to Constantinople, and condemned to expiate his crimes by an ignominious death, he was precipitated from the top of a column raised by the emperor Theodosius in the Place of Taurus. The multitude of Greeks that had offered the purple to Mourzoufle were present at his tragical end, and appeared terrified at a punishment that was much more new to them than the crimes for which it was inflicted.

The perfidy and cruelty of Alexius did not remain long unpunished; the usurper was obliged to wander from city to city, and not unfrequently to conceal the imperial purple under the garb of a mendicant. For a considerable time he only owed his safety to the contempt in which he was held by the conquerors. After having long strayed about in a state of destitution, he was given up to the marquis of Montferrat, who sent him a prisoner into Italy; escaping thence, he again passed into Asia, and found an asylum with the sultan of Iconium. Alexius could not be satisfied to live in peace in his retreat, but joined the Turks in an attack upon his son-in-law Lascaris, whom he could not pardon for having saved a wreck of the empire, and reigning over Bithynia. As the Turks were beaten, the fugitive prince fell at length into the hands of the emperor of Nicæa, who compelled him to retire to a monastery, where he died, forgotten by both Greeks and Latins.

Thus four emperors were immolated to ambition and vengeance — a deplorable spectacle, and most worthy of pity! Amidst the convulsions and fall of an empire, we behold princes of the same family quarrelling for a phantom of authority, snatch from each other by turns both the sceptre and life, surpass the populace in fury, and leave them no crime, no parricide, to commit.

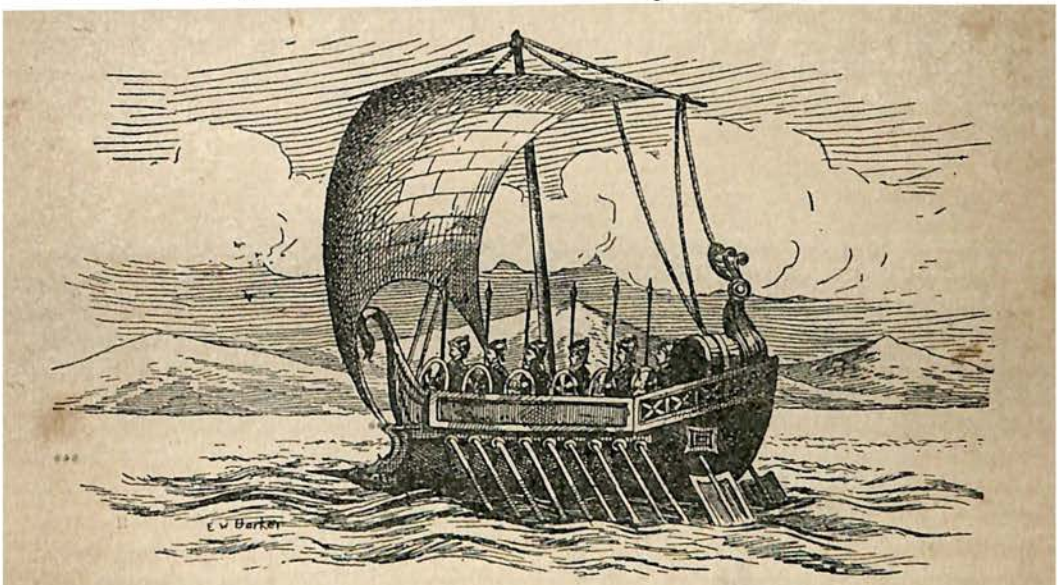
### BALDWIN QUARRELS WITH BONIFACE

Whilst the Greek princes were thus making war against each other, and quarrelling for the wrecks of the empire, the French counts and barons quitted the capital to go and take possession of the cities and provinces that had fallen to their share. Many of them were obliged to conquer, sword in hand, the lands that had been assigned to them. The marquis of Montferrat set out on his march to visit the kingdom of Thessalonica, and receive the homage of his new subjects. The emperor Baldwin, followed by his brother Henry of Hainault, and a great number of knights, made a progress through Thrace and Romania, and everywhere on his passage, was saluted by the

[1204 A.D.]

noisy acclamations of a people always more skilful in flattering their conquerors than in combating their enemies. When he arrived at Hadrianopolis, where he was received in triumph, the new emperor announced his intention of pursuing his march as far as Thessalonica. This unexpected resolution surprised the marquis of Montferrat, who entertained the desire of going alone to his own kingdom. Boniface promised to be faithful to the emperor, to be always ready to employ his forces against the enemies of the empire; but he feared the presence of Baldwin's army in his cities, already exhausted by war.

A serious quarrel broke out between the two princes. The marquis of Montferrat accused the emperor of wishing to get possession of his states; Baldwin fancied he could perceive in the resistance of Boniface the secret design of denying the sovereignty of the head of the empire. Both loved



WAR GALLEY OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY
(From an old print)

justice, and were not wanting in moderation; but now one had become king of Thessalonica and the other emperor of Constantinople, they had courtiers who endeavoured to exasperate their quarrel and inflame their animosity. In spite of all the representations of the marquis of Montferrat, Baldwin led his army into the kingdom of Thessalonica. Boniface considered this obstinacy of the emperor as a flagrant outrage, and swore to take vengeance with his sword. Impelled by passion, he departed suddenly with several knights who had declared in his favour, and got possession of Didymatica, a city belonging to the emperor.

The marquis of Montferrat took with him his wife, Mary of Hungary, the widow of Isaac; and the presence of this princess, with the hopes of keeping up the division among the Latins, drew many Greeks to the banner of Boniface. He declared to them that he fought for their cause, and clothed in the imperial purple a young prince, the son of Isaac and Mary of Hungary. Dragging in his train this phantom of an emperor, around whom the principal inhabitants from all parts of Romania rallied, he resumed the road to Hadrianopolis, and made preparations for besieging that city. Boniface,

daily becoming more irritated, would listen to neither the counsels nor the prayers of his companions in arms; and discord was about to cause the blood of the Latins to flow, if the doge of Venice, the count of Blois, and the barons that remained at Constantinople, had not earnestly employed their authority and credit to prevent the misfortunes with which the new empire was threatened. The marquis of Montferrat promised to submit his quarrel with Baldwin to the judgment of the counts and barons.

In the meanwhile Baldwin had taken possession of Thessalonica. As soon as he heard of the hostilities of the marquis of Montferrat, he hastily marched back to Hadrianopolis. He was brooding over projects of vengeance, and threatening to repel force by force, and oppose war to war, when he met the deputies.

He promised to lay down his arms, and repair to Constantinople, to adjust the quarrel between him and the marquis of Montferrat. The marquis of Montferrat, who very shortly followed him, entered the capital with a degree of mistrust; but the welcome he received from Baldwin and the other leaders completely appeased all his resentments.

### OTHER CONQUESTS

As soon as peace was re-established, the knights and barons again quitted the capital to pass through the provinces, and subdue such as were refractory. The count of Blois, who had obtained Bithynia, sent his knights across the Bosporus; the troops of the crusaders gained several advantages over those of Láscaris. Penamenia, Lopada, Nicomedia, and some other cities, opened their gates to the conquerors, after a feeble resistance. The Latins brought under their dominion all the coasts of the Propontis and the Bosporus, as far as the ancient Æolis. Henry of Hainault was not idle in this new war: whilst the warriors of the count of Blois were pushing their conquests towards Nicæa he led his men-at-arms into Phrygia, unfurled his triumphant banners in the plains where Troy once stood, fought at the same time both Greeks and Turks, in the fields which had been trod by the armies of Xerxes and Alexander, and took possession of all the country that extends from the Hellespont to Mount Ida.

At the same time the marquis of Montferrat, now the peaceable master of Thessalonica, undertook the conquest of Greece. He advanced into Thessaly, passed the chain of mountains of Olympus and Ossa, and took possession of Larissa. Boniface and his knights, without fear and without danger, passed through the narrow straits of Thermopylæ, and penetrated into Bœotia and Attica. They put to flight Leo Sgurre, who was the scourge of a vast province; and their exploits might have reminded the Greeks of those heroes of the early ages who travelled about the world fighting monsters and subduing tyrants. As all the Greeks, for so long a time oppressed, sighed for a change, the heroes of the Crusades were everywhere received as liberators. Whilst Boniface was becoming possessed of the beautiful countries of Greece, Geoffrey de Villehardouin, nephew of the marshal of Champagne, established the authority of the Latins in the Peloponnesus. After having driven the troops of Michael Comnenus to the mountains of Epirus, he occupied, without fighting, Coronea and Patras, and met with no resistance except in the canton of Lacedæmonia. The conquered lands and cities were given to the barons, who rendered fealty and homage to the king of Thessalonica and the emperor of Constantinople.

[1205 A.D.]

Greece then beheld lords of Argos and Corinth, grand sieurs of Thebes, dukes of Athens, and princes of Achaia. French knights dictated laws in the city of Agamemnon, in the city of Minerva, in the country of Lycurgus, and in that of Epaminondas. Strange destiny of the warriors of this Crusade, who had quitted the West to conquer the city and lands of Jesus Christ, and whom fortune had conducted into places filled with the remembrances of the gods of Homer and the glory of profane antiquity!

## THE BULGARIAN WAR

The crusaders were not allowed to felicitate themselves long upon their conquests. Possessors of an empire much more difficult to be preserved than invaded, they had not the ability to master fortune, which soon took from them all that victory had bestowed. They exercised their power with violence, and conciliated neither their subjects nor their neighbours. Joannice [Johannitsa, John, Kalojan, or Calo-John], king of the Bulgarians, had sent an ambassador to Baldwin, with offers of friendship; Baldwin replied with much haughtiness, and threatened to compel Joannice to descend from his usurped throne. When despoiling the Greeks of their property, the crusaders shut out from themselves every source of prosperity, and reduced men, to whom they left nothing but life, to despair. To fill up the measure of their imprudence, they received into their armies the Greeks, whom they loaded with contempt, and who became their implacable enemies. Not content with reigning over cities, they were desirous of subjugating hearts to their will, and awakened fanaticism. Unjust persecutions exasperated the minds of the Greek priests, who declaimed with vehemence against tyranny, and who, reduced to misery, were listened to as oracles and revered as martyrs.

COAT OF MAIL OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

In their despair, the conquered people resolved to have recourse to arms; and, looking around them to find enemies for the crusaders, they implored the alliance and protection of the king of the Bulgarians. There was formed a widely-extended conspiracy, into which all entered to whom slavery was no longer tolerable. All at once the storm burst forth by the massacre of the Latins; a war-cry arose from Mount Hæmus to the Hellespont; the crusaders, dispersed in the various cities and countries, were surprised by a furious and pitiless enemy. The Venetians and French, who guarded Hadrianopolis and Didymatica, were not able to resist the multitude of the Greeks; some were slaughtered in the streets; others retired in disorder, and, in their flight, beheld with grief their banners torn down from the towers, and replaced by the standards of the Bulgarians. The roads were covered with fugitive warriors,

who found no asylum in a country which lately trembled at the fame of their arms.

Every city besieged by the Greeks was ignorant of the fate of the other cities confided to the defence of the Latins; communications were interrupted; in the provinces sinister rumours prevailed, which represented the capital in flames, all the cities given up to pillage, and all the armies of the Franks dispersed or annihilated. When the report of these disasters reached Constantinople, Baldwin assembled the counts and barons. The crusaders who were engaged in warlike expeditions on the other side of the Bosporus received orders to abandon their conquests, and to return immediately to the standards of the main army. Baldwin waited for them several days, but as he was impatient to begin the war, and wished to astonish the enemy by the promptitude of his proceedings, he set out at the head of the knights that remained in the capital, and, five days after his departure, appeared before the walls of Hadrianopolis.

The leaders of the crusade, accustomed to brave all obstacles, were never checked nor restrained by the small number of their own soldiers, nor the multitude of their enemies. The capital of Thrace, surrounded by impregnable ramparts, was defended by a hundred thousand Greeks, in whom thirst of vengeance supplied the want of courage. Baldwin mustered scarcely eight thousand men around his banners. The doge of Venice soon arrived with eight thousand Venetians. The Latin fugitives came from all parts to join this small army. The crusaders pitched their tents, and prepared to lay siege to the city. Their preparations proceeded but slowly, and provisions were beginning to fail them, when the report reached them of the march of the king of the Bulgarians. Joannice, the leader of a barbarous people, himself more barbarous than his subjects, was advancing with a formidable army. He concealed his ambitious projects and his desire for vengeance under an appearance of religious zeal, and caused a standard of St. Peter, which he had received from the pope, to be borne before him. This new ally of the Greeks boasted of being a leader of a holy enterprise, and threatened to exterminate the Franks, whom he accused of having assumed the cross for the purpose of ravaging the provinces and pillaging the cities of Christians.

The king of the Bulgarians was preceded in his march by a numerous troop of Wallachians and Comans, whom the hopes of pillage had drawn from the mountains and forests near the banks of the Danube and Borysthenes. The Comans, more ferocious than the nations of Mount Hæmus, drank, it was said, the blood of their captives, and sacrificed Christians on the altars of their idols. Like the warriors of Scythia, accustomed to fight whilst flying, the Wallachian horsemen received orders from Joannice to provoke the enemy, even in their camp, and to endeavour to draw the heavy cavalry of the Franks into an ambuscade. The barons were aware of this danger, and forbade the crusaders to quit their tents, or go beyond their entrenchments. But such was the character of the French warriors, that prudence, in their eyes, deprived valour of all its lustre, and it appeared disgraceful to shun the fight in the presence and amidst the scoffs of an enemy.

### DEFEAT OF THE LATINS

Scarcely had the barbarians appeared near the camp, when the sight of them made even the leaders themselves forget the orders they had issued only the night before. The emperor and the count of Blois flew to meet the

[1205 A.D.]

enemy, put them to flight, and pursued them with ardour for the space of two leagues. But all at once the barbarians rallied, and in their turn charged the Christians. The latter, who believed they had gained a victory, were obliged to defend themselves in a country with which they were unacquainted. Their squadrons, exhausted by fatigue, were surprised and surrounded by the army of Joannice; pressed on all sides, they made useless efforts to recover their line of battle, but had no power either to fly, or resist the barbarians. The count of Blois fell, covered with wounds, and his faithful squire died by his side.

The emperor Baldwin still disputed the victory; the bravest of his knights and barons followed him into the *mêlée*, and a horrible carnage marked their progress through the ranks of the barbarians. Peter, bishop of Bethlehem, Stephen count of Perche, Renaud de Montmirail, Mathieu de Valencourt, Robert de Ronçai, and a crowd of lords and valiant warriors, lost their lives in defending their sovereign. Baldwin remained almost alone on the field of battle, and still continued fighting bravely; but at length, overpowered by numbers, he fell into the hands of the Bulgarians, who loaded him with chains. The wreck of the army retired in the greatest disorder, and only owed their safety to the prudent bravery of the doge of Venice and the marshal of Champagne, who had been left to guard the camp.

In the night that followed the battle, the crusaders raised the siege of Hadrianopolis, and retook the route to the capital, amidst a thousand dangers. The Bulgarians and the Comans, proud of their victory, pursued without intermission the army they had conquered; this army, which had lost half of its numbers, was in great want of provisions, and had great difficulty in dragging along the wounded and the baggage. The crusaders were plunged in a melancholy silence, their despair was evident in their actions and on their countenances. At Rodosto they met Henry of Hainault, and several other knights, who were on their way from the provinces of Asia, to join the army of Hadrianopolis. The retreating leaders related with tears their defeat and the captivity of Baldwin. All the Franks were seized with grief and terror, on learning they had no longer an emperor. The Greeks that inhabited the capital applauded in secret the triumph of the Bulgarians, and their ill-concealed joy still further increased the alarms of the Latins. A great number of knights, overcome by so many reverses, saw no safety but in flight, and embarked hastily on board some Venetian vessels.

In the meantime, Joannice continued his pursuit of the conquered army. The Greeks, united with the Bulgarians, took possession of all the provinces, and left the Latins no repose. Among the disasters of which contemporary history has left us a deplorable account, we must not forget the massacre of twenty thousand Armenians. This numerous colony had left the banks of the Euphrates, and established themselves in the province of Natolia. After the conquest of Constantinople, they declared for the Latins, and when the latter experienced their reverses, finding themselves menaced and pursued by the Greeks, they crossed the Bosporus, and followed Henry of Hainault, who was marching towards Hadrianopolis. The Armenians took with them their flocks and their families; they drew, in carriages, all that they possessed that was most valuable, and had great difficulty, on their march across the mountains of Thrace, in keeping up with the army of the crusaders. These unfortunate people were surprised by the barbarians, and, to a man, perished beneath the swords of a pitiless conqueror.

The Franks wept at the defeat and destruction of the Armenians, without being able to avenge them; they had nothing but enemies throughout

the vast provinces of the empire. Beyond the Bosporus, they only preserved the castle of Peges; on the European side, only Rodosto and Selymbria. Their conquests in ancient Greece were not yet threatened by the Bulgarians; but these distant possessions only served to divide their forces. Henry of Hainault, who took the title of regent, performed prodigies of valour in endeavouring to retake some of the cities of Thrace; and lost, in various combats, a great number of the warriors that remained under his banners.

The bishop of Soissons and some other crusaders, invested with the confidence of their unfortunate companions in arms, were sent into Italy, France, and the county of Flanders, to solicit the assistance of the knights and barons; but the succour they hoped for could only arrive slowly, and the enemy continued to make rapid progress. The army of the Bulgarians, like a violent tempest, advanced on all sides; it desolated the shores of the Hellespont, extended its ravages into the kingdom of Thessalonica, repassed Mount Hæmus, and returned, more numerous and more formidable than ever, to the banks of the Hebrus. The Latin empire had no other defenders but a few warriors divided among the various cities and fortresses, and every day war and desertion diminished the numbers and strength of the unfortunate conquerors of Byzantium. Five hundred knights, picked warriors of the army of the crusaders, were attacked before the walls of Rusium, and cut to pieces by a countless multitude of Bulgarians and Comans.[1] This defeat was not less fatal than the battle of Hadrianopolis; the hordes of Mount Hæmus and the Borysthenes carried terror everywhere. On their passage, the country was in flames, and the cities afforded neither refuge nor means of defence. The land was covered with soldiers, who slaughtered all who came in their way; the sea was covered with pirates, who threatened every coast with their brigandage. Constantinople expected every day to see the standards of the victorious Joannice beneath its walls, and only owed its safety to the excess of evils that desolated all the provinces of the empire.

The king of the Bulgarians did not spare his allies any more than his enemies; he burned and demolished all the cities that fell into his hands. He ruined the inhabitants, dragged them in his train like captives, and made them undergo, in addition to the calamities of war, all the outrages of a jealous and barbarous tyranny. The Greeks, who had solicited his assistance, were at last reduced to implore the aid of the Latins against the implacable fury of their allies. The crusaders accepted with joy the alliance with the Greeks, whom they never ought to have repulsed, and reentered into Hadrianopolis. Didymatica, and most of the cities of Romania, shook off the intolerable yoke of the Bulgarians, and submitted to the Latins. The Greeks, whom Joannice had urged on to despair, showed some bravery, and became useful auxiliaries to the Latins; and the new empire might have hoped for a return of days of prosperity and glory, if so many calamities could possibly have been repaired by a few transient successes. But all the provinces were strewed with ruins, and the cities and countries were without inhabitants. The hordes of Mount Hæmus, whether victorious or conquered, still continued their predatory habits. They easily recovered from their losses; the losses of the Franks became every day more irreparable. The leader of the Bulgarians sought out everywhere the foes of the new empire; and, being abandoned by the Greeks of Romania, he formed an alliance with Lascaris, the implacable enemy of the Latins.

[1 Gibbon puts the loss at 120.]

[1205–1206 A.D.]

The pope in vain exhorted the nations of France and Italy to take up arms for the assistance of the conquerors of Byzantium; he could not awaken their enthusiasm for a cause that presented to its defenders nothing but certain evils, and dangers without glory.

## THE FATE OF BALDWIN

Amidst the perils that continued to multiply, the crusaders remained perfectly ignorant of the fate of Baldwin; sometimes it was said that he had broken his bonds, and had been seen wandering in the forests of Servia; sometimes that he had died of grief in prison; sometimes that he had been massacred in the midst of a banquet by the king of the Bulgarians; that his mutilated members had been cast out upon the rocks, and that his skull, encased in gold, served as a cup for his barbarous conqueror. Among the romantic accounts that were circulated concerning Baldwin, we must not omit the following: The emperor was kept close prisoner at Terenova, where the wife of Joannice became desperately in love with him, and proposed to him to escape with her. Baldwin rejected this proposal, and the wife of Joannice, irritated by his disdain and refusal, accused him to her husband of having entertained an adulterous passion. The barbarous Joannice caused his unfortunate captive to be massacred at a banquet, and his body was cast on to the rocks, a prey to vultures and wild beasts. But people could not be convinced that he was dead. A hermit had retired to the forest of Glançon, on the Hainault side, and the people of the neighbourhood became persuaded that this hermit was Count Baldwin. The solitary at first answered with frankness, and refused the homage they wished to render. They persisted, and at length he was induced to play a part, and gave himself out for Baldwin. At first he had a great many partisans; but the king of France, Louis VIII, having invited him to his court, he was confounded by the questions that were put to him: he took to flight, and was arrested in Burgundy by Erard de Chastenai, a Burgundian gentleman, whose family still exists. Jane, countess of Flanders, caused the impostor to be hung in the great square of Lisle.[e] Several messengers, sent by Henry of Hainault, travelled through the cities of Bulgaria to learn the fate of Baldwin; but returned to Constantinople, without having been able to ascertain anything. A year after the battle of Hadrianopolis, the pope, at the solicitation of the crusaders, conjured Joannice to restore to the Latins of Byzantium the head of their new empire. The king of the Bulgarians contented himself with replying, that Baldwin had paid the tribute of nature, and that his deliverance was no longer in the power of mortals.[1] This answer destroyed all hopes of again seeing the imprisoned monarch, and the Latins no longer entertained a doubt of the death of their emperor.

Henry of Hainault received the deplorable heritage of his brother with tears and deep regret, and succeeded to the empire amidst general mourning and sorrow. To complete their misfortunes, the Latins had to weep for the loss of Dandolo, who finished his glorious career at Constantinople, and whose last look must have perceived the rapid decline of an empire he had founded. The greater part of the crusaders had either perished in battle or returned to the west.[d]

[1 Lavisse and Rambaud c quote his words, "He absolved the debt of the flesh while he was held in prison" (*debitum carnis exsolverat dum carcere teneretur*). His two daughters inherited Flanders and Hainault.]

HENRY OF HAINAULT

In all civilised hostility a treaty is established for the exchange of ransom of prisoners; and if their captivity be prolonged, their condition is known, and they are treated according to their rank with humanity or honour. But the savage Bulgarian was a stranger to the laws of war; his prisons were involved in darkness and silence; and above a year elapsed before the Latins could be assured of the death of Baldwin, before his brother, the regent Henry, would consent to assume the title of emperor. His moderation was applauded by the Greeks as an act of rare and inimitable virtue. Their light and perfidious ambition was eager to seize or anticipate the moment of a vacancy, while a law of succession, the guardian both of the prince and people, was gradually defined and confirmed in the hereditary monarchies of Europe.

In the support of the Eastern Empire, Henry was gradually left without an associate, as the heroes of the Crusades retired from the world or from the war. The doge of Venice, the venerable Dandolo, in the fullness of years and glory, sank into the grave. The marquis of Montferrat was slowly recalled from the Peloponnesian War to the revenge of Baldwin and the defence of Thessalonica. Some nice disputes of feudal homage and service were reconciled in a personal interview between the emperor and the king: they were firmly united by mutual esteem, and the common danger; and their alliance was sealed by the nuptials of Henry with the daughter of the Italian prince. He soon deplored the loss of his friend and father.

At the persuasion of some faithful Greeks, Boniface made a bold and successful inroad among the hills of Rhodope; the Bulgarians fled on his approach, they assembled to harass his retreat. On the intelligence that his rear was attacked, without waiting for any defensive armour, he leaped on horseback, couched his lance, and drove the enemies before him; but in the rash pursuit he was pierced with a mortal wound; and the head of the king of Thessalonica was presented to Joannice, who enjoyed the honours, without the merit, of victory. It is here, at this melancholy event, that the pen or the voice of Geoffrey de Villehardouin seems to drop or to expire; and if he still exercised his military office of marshal of Romania, his subsequent exploits are buried in oblivion.[1]

The character of Henry was not unequal to his arduous situation: in the siege of Constantinople, and beyond the Hellespont, he had deserved the fame of a valiant knight and skilful commander; and his courage was tempered with a degree of prudence and mildness unknown to his impetuous brother. In the double war against the Greeks of Asia and the Bulgarians of Europe, he was ever the foremost on shipboard or on horseback; and though he cautiously provided for the success of his arms, the drooping Latins were often roused by his example to save and to second their fearless emperor. But such efforts, and some supplies of men and money from France, were of less avail than the errors, the cruelty, and death of their most formidable adversary. When the despair of the Greek subjects invited Joannice as their deliverer, they hoped that he would protect their liberty and adopt their laws; they were soon taught to compare the degrees of national ferocity, and to execrate the savage conqueror who no longer dissembled his intention of dispeopling Thrace, of demolishing the cities, and of transplanting the inhabitants beyond the Danube. Many towns and

[1 According to Finlay *a* he "appears to have died about the year 1218."]

[1207-1216 A.D.]

villages of Thrace were already evacuated; a heap of ruins marked the place of Philippopolis, and a similar calamity was expected at Demotica and Hadrianopolis, by the first authors of the revolt. They raised a cry of grief and repentance to the throne of Henry; the emperor alone had the magnanimity to forgive and trust them. No more than four hundred knights, with their sergeants and archers, could be assembled under his banner; and with this slender force he fought and repulsed the Bulgarian, who, besides his infantry, was at the head of forty thousand horse. In this expedition, Henry felt the difference between a hostile and a friendly country; the remaining cities were preserved by his arms, and the savage, with shame and loss, was compelled to relinquish his prey.

The siege of Thessalonica was the last of the evils which Joannice inflicted or suffered; he was stabbed during the night in his tent; and the general, perhaps the assassin, who found him weltering in his blood, ascribed the blow with general applause to the lance of St. Demetrius.

After several victories, the prudence of Henry concluded an honourable peace with the successor of the tyrant, and with the Greek princes of Nicæa and Epirus. If he ceded some doubtful limits, an ample kingdom was reserved for himself and his feudatories; and his reign, which lasted only ten years, afforded a short interval of prosperity and peace. Far above the narrow policy of Baldwin and Boniface, he freely entrusted to the Greeks the most important offices of the state and army; and this liberality of sentiment and practice was the more seasonable, as the princes of Nicæa and Epirus had already learned to seduce and employ the mercenary valour of the Latins. It was the aim of Henry to unite and reward his deserving subjects of every nation and language; but he appeared less solicitous to accomplish the impracticable union of the two churches.

HELMET OF THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES

Pelagius, the pope's legate, who acted as the sovereign of Constantinople, had interdicted the worship of the Greeks, and sternly imposed the payment of tithes, the double procession of the Holy Ghost, and a blind obedience to the Roman pontiff. As the weaker party, they pleaded the duties of conscience, and implored the rights of toleration: "Our bodies," they said, "are Cæsar's, but our souls belong only to God." The persecution was checked by the firmness of the emperor; and if we can believe that the same prince was poisoned by the Greeks themselves, we must entertain a contemptible idea of the sense of gratitude in mankind. His valour was a vulgar attribute, which he shared with ten thousand knights; but Henry possessed the superior courage to oppose, in a superstitious age, the pride and avarice of the clergy. In the cathedral of St. Sophia he presumed to place his throne on the right hand of the patriarch; and this presumption excited the sharpest censure of Pope Innocent III. By a salutary edict, one of the first examples of the laws of mortmain, he prohib-

ited the alienation of fiefs; many of the Latins, desirous of returning to Europe, resigned their estates to the church for a spiritual or temporal reward; these holy lands were immediately discharged from military service, and a colony of soldiers would have been gradually transformed into a college of priests.

The virtuous Henry died at Thessalonica (1216), in the defence of that kingdom, and of an infant, the son of his friend Boniface. In the first two emperors of Constantinople the male line of the counts of Flanders was extinct.*f*

### PIERRE DE COURTENAI AND ROBERT OF NAMUR

Baldwin and Henry had a sister named Yolandè, married to Pierre de Courtenai, count of Auxerre. This latter was elected emperor. He was then in France, and hastened to raise an army. He visited Honorius III at Rome, embarked for Durazzo, and from there followed the Egnatian road. Attacked by the Epirots in the gorges of Elbassan, his army was destroyed; the papal legate perished; the emperor was taken, and doubtless died in captivity.

He had left in the West ten children, of whom the eldest was Philippe of Namur. The empress, his wife, had come by sea to Constantinople, where a little son was born, afterwards to be Baldwin II. She took the regency for Philippe of Namur, renewed the treaties with the emperor of Nicæa, made him marry her stepdaughter, and died in 1219. Philippe of Namur having refused to leave his Meuse comté, his younger brother, Robert, was thereupon elected.

His reign marked the rapid decline of the empire. All the chiefs of the First Crusade — Baldwin, Henry of Flanders, Boniface de Montferrat, Louis de Blois, Dandolo, and Villehardouin — were dead. The number of Latin warriors diminished unceasingly by combats or by returning to the West, and were not recruited by new arrivals. Robert had one of his sisters married to King Andrew of Hungary, one to Geoffrey of Achaia, and a third to the emperor of Nicæa. One of his nieces married John Asan II of Bulgaria; he himself was about to marry a daughter of Lascaris. But these family alliances gave him neither power nor security.

The despot of Epirus, Theodore, who never ceased taking land from the Latins, took advantage of the Thessalonican king being gone to seek help in the West to surprise his capital and finish conquering his provinces (1222). So perished the Lombard kingdom of Thessalonica.

In Nicæa, Joannes Vatatzes, successor to Lascaris, renewed war against the French, inflicted on them a bloody defeat at Pemanene (1224), and conquered nearly all Thrace. The Greeks had now two emperors, without counting the one at Trebizond, for the despot of Epirus had got himself crowned by the archbishop of Okhrida in Thessalonica. The forces of these two emperors, henceforth enemies, marched each on its own road to Hadrianopolis. The town at first yielded to the Nicæan troops, then drove them away and opened their gates to those of Epirus. Robert could not even interfere in the struggle, and nothing remained but to see which of the two Greek armies would be the first to enter Byzantium. In his own court a bloody drama showed how little respected and how weak was sovereign power. Robert was very much in love with a young Neuville lady, already engaged to a Burgundian cavalier; and the mother consented to get the first engagement broken off. The rejected cavalier gathered his relatives

[1228-1237 A.D.]

and friends and forced a way into the palace by night. He cut off the nose and lips of the young girl, and threw her mother into the Bosporus. Robert could obtain no redress from his barons for this cruel insult. He went to seek help in the West and died on the journey (1228).[c]

### JEAN DE BRIENNE

It was only in the age of chivalry that valour could ascend from a private station to the thrones of Jerusalem and Constantinople. The titular kingdom of Jerusalem had devolved to Mary, the daughter of Isabella and Conrad of Montferrat, and the granddaughter of Almeric or Amaury. She was given to Jean de Brienne, of a noble family in Champagne, by the public voice and the judgment of Philippe Auguste, who named him as the most worthy champion of the Holy Land. In the Fifth Crusade, he led a hundred thousand Latins to the conquest of Egypt; by him the siege of Damietta was achieved, and the subsequent failure was justly ascribed to the pride and avarice of the legate. After the marriage of his daughter with Frederick II, he was provoked by the emperor's ingratitude to accept the command of the army of the church; and though advanced in life, and despoiled of royalty, the sword and spirit of Jean de Brienne were still ready for the service of Christendom.

In the seven years of his brother's reign, Baldwin de Courtenai had not emerged from a state of childhood, and the barons of Romania felt the strong necessity of placing the sceptre in the hands of a man and a hero. The veteran king of Jerusalem might have disdained the name and office of regent; they agreed to invest him for life with the title and prerogatives of emperor, on the sole condition that Baldwin should marry his second daughter, and succeed at a mature age to the throne of Constantinople. The expectation, both of the Greeks and Latins, was kindled by the renown, the choice, and the presence of John de Brienne; and they admired his martial aspect, his green and vigorous age of more than fourscore years, and his size and stature, which surpassed the common measure of mankind.

But avarice and the love of ease appear to have chilled the love of enterprise; his troops were disbanded, and two years rolled away without action or honour, till he was awakened by the dangerous alliance of Vatatzes, emperor of Nicæa, and of Asan, king of Bulgaria. They besieged Constantinople by sea and land, with an army of one hundred thousand men, and a fleet of three hundred ships of war; while the entire force of the Latin emperor was reduced to 160 knights, and a small addition of sergeants and archers. Instead of defending the city, the hero made a sally at the head of his cavalry; and of forty-eight squadrons of the enemy, no more than three escaped from the edge of his invincible sword. Fired by his example, the infantry and the citizens boarded the vessels that anchored close to the walls; and twenty-five were dragged in triumph into the harbour of Constantinople. At the summons of the emperor, the vassals and allies armed in her defence, broke through every obstacle that opposed their passage; and, in the succeeding year, obtained a second victory over the same enemies. By the rude poets of the age, Jean de Brienne is compared to Hector, Roland, and Judas Maccabæus; but their credit and his glory receive some abatement from the silence of the Greeks. The empire was soon deprived of the last of her champions; and the dying monarch was ambitious to enter paradise in the habit of a Franciscan friar (1237).

### BALDWIN II

In the double victory of Jean de Brienne we cannot discover the name or exploits of his pupil Baldwin, who had attained the age of military service, and who succeeded to the imperial dignity on the decease of his adoptive father. The royal youth was employed on a commission more suitable to his temper; he was sent to visit the western courts of the pope more especially, and of the king of France; to excite their pity by the view of his innocence and distress; and to obtain some supplies of men or money for the relief of the sinking empire. He thrice repeated these mendicant visits, in which he seemed to prolong his stay, and postpone his return; of the five-and-twenty years of his reign, a greater number were spent abroad than at home, and in no place did the emperor deem himself less free and secure than in his native country and his capital.

By such shameful or ruinous expedients he returned to Romania with an army of thirty thousand soldiers, whose numbers were doubled in the apprehension of the Greeks. But the troops and treasures of France melted away in his unskilful hands; and the throne of the Latin emperor was protected by a dishonourable alliance with the Turks and Komans. To secure the former, he consented to bestow his niece on the unbelieving sultan of Cogni. To please the latter, he complied with their pagan rites; a dog was sacrificed between the two armies and the contracting parties tasted each other's blood, as a pledge of their fidelity. In the palace, or prison, of Constantinople the successor of Augustus demolished the vacant houses for winter fuel, and stripped the lead from the churches for the daily expense of his family. Some usurious loans were dealt with a scanty hand by the merchants of Italy; and Philippe, his son and heir, was pawned at Venice as the security of a debt. Thirst, hunger, and nakedness are positive evils; but wealth is relative, and a prince who would be rich in a private station may be exposed by the increase of his wants to all the anxiety and bitterness of poverty.

### THE CROWN OF THORNS

But in this abject distress, the emperor and empire were still possessed of an ideal treasure, which drew its fantastic value from the superstition of the Christian world. The merit of the true cross was somewhat impaired by its frequent division; and a long captivity among the infidels might shed some suspicion on the fragments that were produced in the East and West. But another relic of the Passion was preserved in the imperial chapel of Constantinople; and the crown of thorns which had been placed on the head of Christ was equally precious and authentic. It had formerly been the practice of the Egyptian debtors to deposit, as a security, the mummies of their parents; and both their honour and their religion were bound for the redemption of the pledge. In the same manner, and in the absence of the emperor, the barons of Romania borrowed the sum of 13,134 pieces of gold [£7000 sterling] on the credit of the holy crown.

The success of this transaction tempted the Latin emperor to offer, with the same generosity, the remaining furniture of his chapel — a large and authentic portion of the true cross; the baby linen of the Son of God; the lance, the sponge, and the chain of his Passion; the rod of Moses; and part of the skull of St. John the Baptist. For the reception of these spiritual treasures, twenty thousand marks were expended by St. Louis on a stately

[1237–1261 A.D.]

foundation, the holy chapel of Paris, on which the muse of Boileau has bestowed a comic immortality. The truth of such remote and ancient relics, which cannot be proved by any human testimony, must be admitted by those who believe in the miracles which they have performed.

## PROGRESS OF THE GREEKS (1237–1261 A.D.)

The Latins of Constantinople were on all sides encompassed and pressed: their sole hope, the last delay of their ruin, was in the division of their Greek and Bulgarian enemies; and of this hope they were deprived by the superior arms and policy of Vatatzes, emperor of Nicæa. From the Propontis to the rocky coast of Pamphylia, Asia was peaceful and prosperous under his reign; and the events of every campaign extended his influence in Europe. The strong cities of the hills of Macedonia and Thrace were rescued from the Bulgarians; and their kingdom was circumscribed by its present and proper limits, along the southern banks of the Danube. The sole emperor of the Romans could no longer brook that a lord of Epirus, a Comnenian prince of the West, should presume to dispute or share the honours of the purple; and the humble Demetrius changed the colour of his buskins, and accepted with gratitude the appellation of despot. His own subjects were exasperated by his baseness and incapacity; they implored the protection of their supreme lord.

A Thirteenth Century Crusader

After some resistance, the kingdom of Thessalonica was united to the empire of Nicæa; and Vatatzes reigned without a competitor from the Turkish borders to the Adriatic Gulf. The princes of Europe honoured his merits and power; and had he subscribed an orthodox creed, it should seem that the pope would have abandoned, without reluctance, the Latin throne of Constantinople. But the death of Vatatzes, the short and busy reign of Theodore, his son, and the helpless infancy of his grandson John, suspended the restoration of the Greeks.

The young prince was oppressed by the ambition of his guardian and colleague, Michael Palæologus, who displayed the virtues and vices that belong to the founder of a new dynasty. The emperor Baldwin had flattered himself that he might recover some provinces or cities by an impotent negotiation. His ambassadors were dismissed from Nicæa with mockery and contempt. The captivity of Villehardouin, prince of Achaia, deprived the Latins of the most active and powerful vassal of their expiring monarchy. The republics of Venice and Genoa disputed, in the first of their naval wars, the command of the sea and the commerce of the East. Pride and interest attached the Venetians to the defence of Constantinople; their

rivals were tempted to promote the designs of her enemies, and the alliance of the Genoese with the schismatic conqueror provoked the indignation of the Latin church.

### CONSTANTINOPLE RECOVERED BY THE GREEKS (1261 A.D.)

Intent in this great object, the emperor Michael visited in person and strengthened the troops and fortifications of Thrace. The remains of the Latins were driven from their last possessions; he assaulted without success the suburb of Galata; and corresponded with a perfidious baron, who proved unwilling or unable to open the gates of the metropolis. The next spring his favourite general, Alexius Strategopulus, whom he had decorated with the title of Cæsar, passed the Hellespont with eight hundred horse and some infantry, on a secret expedition. The weakness of Constantinople, and the distress and terror of the Latins, were familiar to the observation of the volunteers; and they represented the present moment as the most propitious to surprise and conquest. A rash youth, the new governor of the Venetian colony, had sailed away with thirty galleys, and the best of the French knights, on a wild expedition to Daphnusia, a town on the Black Sea, at the distance of forty leagues; and the remaining Latins were without strength or suspicion. They were informed that Alexius had passed the Hellespont; but their apprehensions were lulled by the smallness of his original numbers, and their imprudence had not watched the subsequent increase of his army. If he left his main body to second and support his operations, he might advance unperceived in the night with the chosen detachment. No sooner had Alexius passed the threshold of the Golden Gate, than he trembled at his own rashness; he paused, he deliberated, till the desperate volunteers urged him forward, by the assurance that in retreat lay the greatest and most inevitable danger. Whilst the cæsar kept his regulars in firm array, the commons dispersed themselves on all sides; an alarm was sounded, and the threats of fire and pillage compelled the citizens to a decisive resolution. The Greeks of Constantinople remembered their native sovereigns; the Genoese merchants their recent alliance and Venetian foes; every quarter was in arms; and the air resounded with a general acclamation of "Long life and victory to Michael and Joannes, the august emperors of the Romans!"

Their rival, Baldwin, was awakened by the sound; but the most pressing danger could not prompt him to draw his sword in the defence of a city which he deserted, perhaps, with more pleasure than regret. Constantinople was irrecoverably lost; but the Latin emperor and the principal families embarked on board the Venetian galleys and steered for the isle of Eubœa, and afterwards for Italy, where the royal fugitive was entertained by the pope and the Sicilian king with a mixture of contempt and pity.

From the loss of Constantinople to his death, he consumed thirteen years, soliciting the Catholic powers to join in his restoration; the lesson had been familiar to his youth, nor was his last exile more indigent or shameful than his three former pilgrimages to the courts of Europe. His son Philippe was the heir of an ideal empire; and the pretensions of his daughter Catharine were transported by her marriage to Charles of Valois, the brother of Philippe le Bel, king of France. The house of Courtenai was represented in the female line by successive alliances, till the title of emperor of Constantinople, too bulky and sonorous for a private name, modestly expired in silence and oblivion.*f*

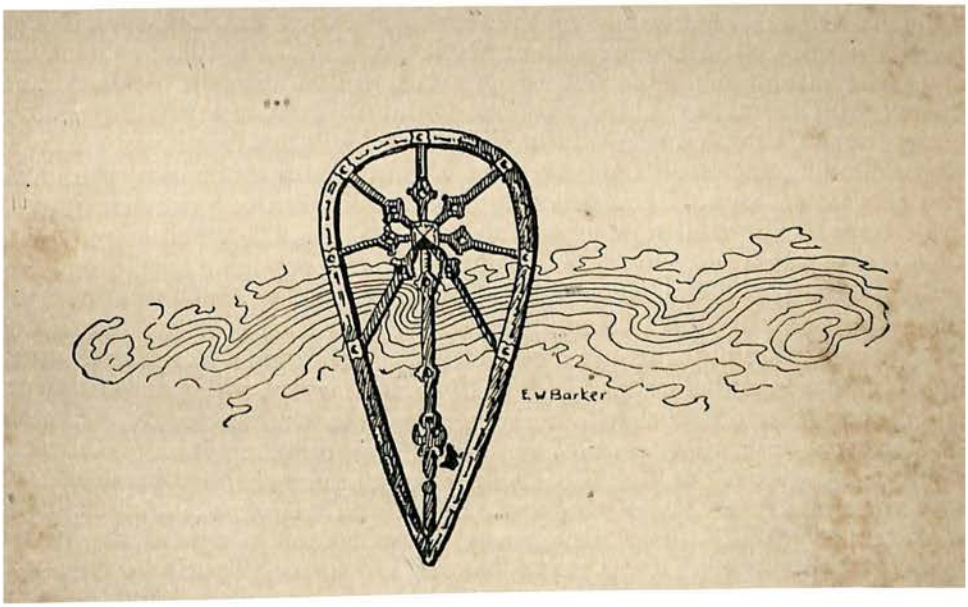
[1261 A.D.]

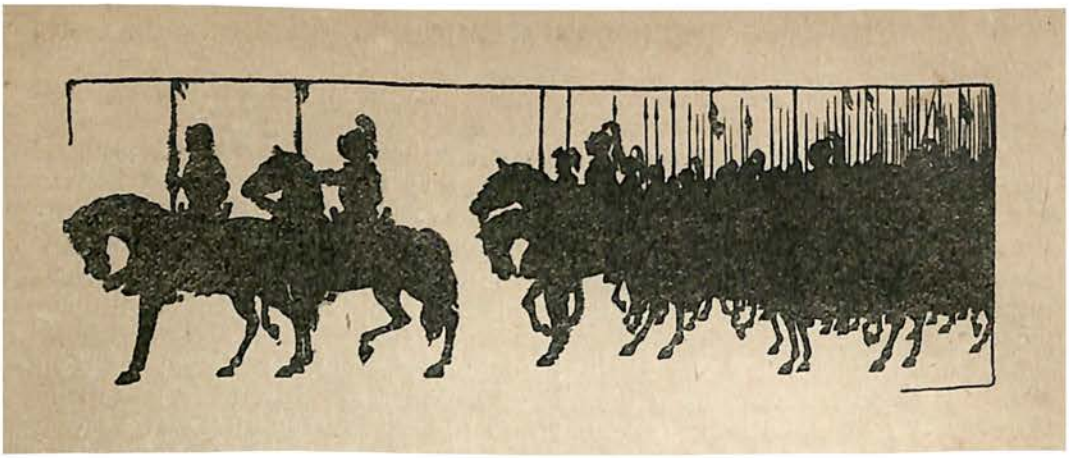
TRACES LEFT BY THE FRANK DOMINATION IN THE GREEK EMPIRE

The crusaders had been able to destroy the Byzantine monarchy but were not able to reconstruct it with profit to themselves. They had to combat not only with the Greeks, but all the various people they had helped to emancipate. In fact, their domination only served to awake and fortify Greek patriotism. "They did great good in Byzantium, both to Hellenism and religion; social distinctions were abolished" (Sathas)—if not abolished, at any rate modified.

In the countries that the Latins held longest, as in the Morea, a certain fusion took place between conquerors and conquered. Nicetas, Acropolitas, Pachymeres gave the name of *gasmuli* to the creole issue of the two races. The French dynasties of Athens and the Morea tended to Hellenism; the princes learned the language of their subjects. Greek stratiota and French cavaliers were treated as on equal footing; they respected the *pronoiai* of the Hellenic cities as privileged and exempt from the Latin communities. There was a great *logothete* and a proto officer of Achaia as there had been a grand steward (*seneschal*) of Romania. In the French schools the Greeks learned afresh the meaning of civic liberty and the dignity of a warrior-landowner.[c]

It will be necessary now to cast a glance back at the rise of that Greek power which had recovered itself thus effectually after the retirement in 1204 of Theodore Lascaris and his founding of a kingdom in Nicæa.[a]





# CHAPTER X

## THE RESTORATION OF THE GREEK EMPIRE

[1204–1391 A.D.]

### THEODORE (I) LASCARIS AND JOANNES VATATZES (1204–1254 A.D.)

THE loss of Constantinople in 1204 had restored a momentary vigour to the Greeks. From their palaces, the princes and nobles were driven into the field; and the fragments of the falling monarchy were grasped by the hands of the most vigorous or the most skilful candidates. In the long and barren pages of the Byzantine annals, it would not be an easy task to equal the two characters of Theodore Lascaris and Joannes Ducas Vatatzes, who had replanted and upheld the Roman standard in Nicæa in Bithynia. The difference of their virtues was happily suited to the diversity of their situation. In his first efforts, the fugitive Lascaris commanded only three cities and two thousand soldiers; his reign was the season of generous and active despair; in every military operation he staked his life and crown; and his enemies, of the Hellespont and the Mæander, were surprised by his celerity and subdued by his boldness.

A victorious reign of eighteen years expanded the principality of Nicæa to the magnitude of an empire. The throne of his successor and son-in-law Vatatzes was founded on a more solid basis, a larger scope, and more plentiful resources; and it was the temper, as well as the interest, of Vatatzes to calculate the risk, to expect the moment, and to insure the success of his ambitious designs. In the decline of the Latins we have briefly exposed the progress of the Greeks, the prudent and gradual advances of a conqueror who, in a reign of thirty-three years, rescued the provinces from national and foreign usurpers, till he pressed on all sides the imperial city — a leafless and sapless trunk, which must fall at the first stroke of the axe.

But his interior and peaceful administration is still more deserving of notice and praise. The calamities of the times had wasted the numbers and the substance of the Greeks; the motives and the means of agriculture were extirpated; and the most fertile lands were left without cultivation or inhabitants. A portion of this vacant property was occupied and improved by the command and for the benefit of the emperor; a powerful hand and a vigilant eye supplied and surpassed, by a skilful management, the minute diligence of a private farmer. The royal domain became the garden and

granary of Asia; and, without impoverishing the people, the sovereign acquired a fund of innocent and productive wealth. His first wife was Irene, the daughter of Theodore Lascaris, a woman more illustrious by her personal merit, the milder virtues of her sex, than by the blood of the Angeli and Comneni that flowed in her veins and transmitted the inheritance of the empire. After her death he was contracted to Anne, or Constance, a natural daughter of the emperor Frederick II; but as the bride had not attained the years of puberty, Vatatzes placed in his solitary bed an Italian damsel of her train, and his amorous weakness bestowed on the concubine the honours, though not the title, of lawful empress. The slaves of the Latins, without law or peace, applauded the happiness of their brethren who had resumed their national freedom; and Vatatzes employed the laudable policy of convincing the Greeks of every dominion that it was their interest to be enrolled in the number of his subjects.

### THEODORE (II) LASCARIS AND JOANNES (IV) LASCARIS (1254–1259 A.D.)

A strong shade of degeneracy is visible between Joannes Vatatzes and his son Theodore. Yet the character of Theodore was not devoid of energy; he had been educated in the school of his father, in the exercise of war and hunting. Constantinople was yet spared; but in the three years of a short reign he thrice led his armies into the heart of Bulgaria. His virtues were sullied by a choleric and suspicious temper. The cruelty of the emperor was exasperated by the pangs of sickness, the approach of a premature end, and the suspicion of poison and magic. The lives and fortunes, the eyes and limbs, of his kinsmen and nobles were sacrificed to each sally of passion. In his last hours the emperor testified a wish to forgive and be forgiven, a just anxiety for the fate of Joannes, his son and successor, who, at the age of eight years, was condemned to the dangers of a long minority. His last choice entrusted the office of guardian to the sanctity of the patriarch Arsenius, and to the courage of George Muzalon, the great domestic, who was equally distinguished by the royal favour and the public hatred. The holy rites were interrupted by a sedition of the guards. Muzalon, his brothers, and his adherents were massacred at the foot of the altar; and the absent patriarch was associated with a new colleague, with Michael Palæologus, the most illustrious in birth and merit of the Greek nobles.

## MICHAEL (VIII) PALÆOLOGUS (1259–1282 A.D.)

As early as the middle of the eleventh century, the noble race of the Palæologi stands high and conspicuous in the Byzantine history. It was the valiant George Palæologus who placed the father of the Comneni on the throne; and his kinsmen, or descendants, continue in each generation to lead the armies and councils of the state. In his early youth Michael was promoted to the office of constable, or commander of the French mercenaries; the private expense of a day never exceeded three pieces of gold; but his ambition was rapacious and profuse, and his gifts were doubled by the graces of his conversation and manners. The love of the soldiers and people excited the jealousy of the court; and Michael thrice escaped from the dangers in which he was involved by his own imprudence or that of his friends.

Under the reign of Justice and Vatatzes, a dispute arose between two officers, one of whom accused the other of maintaining the hereditary right of the Palæologi. The cause was decided, according to the new jurisprudence of the Latins, by single combat: the defendant was overthrown; but he persisted in declaring that himself alone was guilty, and that he had uttered these rash or treasonable speeches without the approbation or knowledge of his patron.

Yet a cloud of suspicion hung over the innocence of the constable; he was still pursued by the whispers of malevolence; and a subtle courtier, the archbishop of Philadelphia, urged him to accept the judgment of God in the fiery proof of the ordeal. Three days before the trial, the patient's arm was enclosed in a bag and secured by the royal signet; and it was incumbent on him to bear a red-hot ball of iron three times from the altar to the rails of the sanctuary, without artifice and without injury.

Palæologus eluded the dangerous experiment with sense and pleasantry. "I am a soldier," said he, "and will boldly enter the lists with my accusers; but a layman, a sinner like myself, is not endowed with the gift of miracles. Your piety, most holy prelate, may deserve the interposition of heaven, and from your hands I will receive the fiery globe, the pledge of my innocence." The archbishop started; the emperor smiled; and the absolution or pardon of Michael was approved by new rewards and new services.

In the succeeding reign, as he held the government of Nicæa, he was secretly informed that the mind of the absent prince was poisoned with jealousy, and that death or blindness would be his final reward. Instead of awaiting the return and sentence of Theodore, the constable with some followers escaped from the city and the empire; and though he was plundered by the Turkomans of the desert, he found a hospitable refuge in the court of the sultan. In the ambiguous state of an exile, Michael reconciled the duties of gratitude and loyalty; drawing his sword against the Tatars, admonishing the garrisons of the Roman limit, and promoting by his influence the restoration of peace, in which his pardon and recall were honourably included.

While he guarded the West against the despot of Epirus, Michael was again suspected and condemned to the palace; and such were his loyalty and weakness that he submitted to be led in chains above six hundred miles from Durazzo to Nicæa. The civility of the messenger alleviated his disgrace; the emperor's sickness dispelled his danger; and the last breath of Theodore which recommended his infant son, at once acknowledged the innocence and the power of Palæologus.

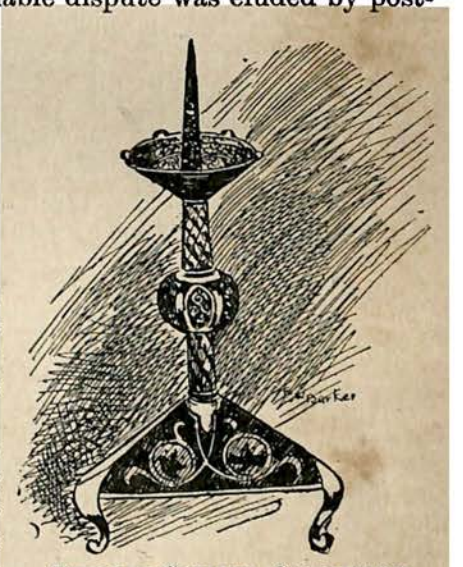
But his innocence had been too unworthily treated, and his power was too strongly felt, to curb an aspiring subject in the fair field that was opened to his ambition. In the council after the death of Theodore, he was the first to pronounce and the last to violate the oath of allegiance to Muzalon; and so dexterous was his conduct that he reaped the benefit without incurring the guilt, or at least the reproach, of the subsequent massacre. In the choice of a regent, he balanced the interests and passions of the candidates, turning their envy and hatred from himself against each other; and forced every competitor to own that, after his own claims, those of Palæologus were best entitled to the preference.

Under the title of grand duke, he accepted or assumed during a long minority the active powers of government; the patriarch was a venerable name; and the factious nobles were seduced or oppressed by the ascendant of his genius. The fruits of the economy of Vatatzes were deposited in a

strong castle on the banks of the Hermus, in the custody of the faithful Varangians; the constable retained his command or influence over the foreign troops. He employed the guards to possess the treasure, and the treasure to corrupt the guards; and whatsoever might be the abuse of the public money, his character was above suspicion of private avarice. By himself, or by his emissaries, he strove to persuade every rank of subjects that their own prosperity would rise in just proportion to the establishment of his authority. The weight of taxes was suspended, the perpetual theme of popular complaint; and he prohibited the trials by the ordeal and judicial combat. For the interest of the prince and people, without any selfish views for himself or his family, the great duke consented to guard and instruct the son of Theodore. It was afterwards agreed that Joannes and Michael should be proclaimed as joint emperors, and raised on the buckler; but that the pre-eminence should be reserved for the birthright of the former.

## MICHAEL PALÆOLOGUS CROWNED EMPEROR (1259 A.D.)

Palæologus was content; but on the day of the coronation, and in the cathedral of Nicæa, his zealous adherents most vehemently urged the just priority of his age and merit. The unseasonable dispute was eluded by postponing to a more convenient opportunity the coronation of Joannes Lascaris; and he walked with a slight diadem in the train of his guardian, who alone received the imperial crown from the hands of the patriarch. A full harvest of honours and employments was distributed among his friends by the grateful Palæologus. In his own family he created a despot and two sebastocrators; Alexius Strategopulus was decorated with the title of cæsar, and that veteran commander soon repaid the obligation by restoring Constantinople, as we have seen, to the Greek emperor.



TWELFTH CENTURY CANDLESTICK

It was in the second year of his reign, while he resided in the palace and gardens of Nymphæum, near Smyrna, that the first messenger arrived at the dead of night; and the stupendous intelligence was imparted to Michael, after he had been gently waked by the tender precaution of his sister Eulogia. The man was unknown or obscure: he produced no letters from the victorious cæsar; nor could it easily be credited, after the defeat of Vatatzes and the recent failure of Palæologus himself, that the capital had been surprised by a detachment of eight hundred soldiers. As an hostage, the doubtful author was confined with the assurance of death or an ample recompense; and the court was left some hours in the anxiety of hope and fear, till the messengers of Alexius arrived with the authentic intelligence, and displayed the trophies of the conquest — the sword and sceptre, the buskins and bonnet, of the usurper Baldwin, which he had dropped in his precipitate flight.[1]

[1 Well may Gelzer *f* comment on this event, "The very worst friend of the Greeks did not see that the regaining of Constantinople was the true beginning of the national misfortune."]

RETURN AND RULE OF THE GREEK EMPEROR

So eager was the impatience of the prince and people, that Michael made his triumphal entry into Constantinople only twenty days after the expulsion of the Latins. The Golden Gate was thrown open at his approach; the devout conqueror dismounted from his horse, and a miraculous image of Mary the Conductress was borne before him, that the divine Virgin in person might appear to conduct him to the temple of her Son, the cathedral of St. Sophia. But after the first transport of devotion and pride, he sighed at the dreary prospect of solitude and ruin. The palace was defiled with smoke and dirt and the gross intemperance of the Franks; whole streets had been consumed by fire, or were decayed by the injuries of time; the sacred and profane edifices were stripped of their ornaments; and, as if they were conscious of their approaching exile, the industry of the Latins had been confined to the work of pillage and destruction. Trade had expired under the pressure of anarchy and distress, and the numbers of inhabitants had decreased with the opulence of the city.[b]

Michael VIII was eager to efface the mark of foreign domination from the capital of the empire, and to repair the injuries of time; but his plans were injudicious, and his success extremely limited. He aspired to be the second founder of the city of Constantinople, as well as of the Eastern Roman Empire. The nobility of his dominions were invited to inhabit the capital by the gift of places and pensions; traders were attracted by monopolies and privileges. The wealth that ought to have been expended in restoring communications between the dispersed and dissevered portions of the Greek nation, in repairing roads and bridges, was wasted in building palaces and adorning churches in the capital, where they were no longer required for a diminished and impoverished population. Crowds of imperial princes and princesses, despots and cæsars, officers of state and courtiers, consumed the revenues which ought to have covered the frontier with impregnable fortresses, and maintained a disciplined standing army and a well-exercised fleet. Yet, while lavishing the public revenues to gratify his pride and acquire popularity, he sacrificed the general interests of the middle classes to a selfish and rapacious fiscal policy.

All the property within the walls of Constantinople, whether it belonged to Greeks or Latins, was adjudged to the imperial government by the right of conquest; but their ancient possessions were restored to the great families whose power he feared, and to those individuals whose services he wished to secure. Sites for building were then leased to the citizens for a fixed rent; yet the Greek government was so despotic, and Michael was so arbitrary in his administration, that twelve years later he pretended that the concessions he had granted to private individuals were merely acts of personal favour, and he demanded the payment of the rent for the past twelve years, the collection of which he enforced with much severity. Michael used other frauds to bring the property of his subjects into the public treasury, or to deprive them of a portion of the money justly due to them by the state. Under the pretext of changing the type of the gold coinage, and commemorating the recovery of Constantinople by impressing an image of its walls on the bezants, he debased the standard of the mint, and issued coins containing only fifteen parts of gold and nine of alloy.

While on one hand he rendered property insecure and impoverished his subjects, he was striving by other arrangements to increase the Greek population of the capital, in order to counterbalance the wealth and influence

of foreign traders. Numbers were drawn from the islands of the Archipelago, and a colony of Tzaconians or Laconians from Monemvasia and the neighbouring districts were settled in the capital, which supplied the imperial fleet with its best sailors. But war, not commerce, was the object of Michael's care; and while he was endeavouring to increase the means of recruiting his army and navy, he allowed the Genoese to profit by his political errors, and render themselves masters of the commerce of the Black Sea, and of great part of the carrying trade of the Greek Empire. In the meantime, the fortifications of Constantinople were repaired; and when Charles of Anjou threatened to invade the East, a second line of wall was added to the fortifications on the land side, and the defences already existing towards the sea were strengthened.

Michael VIII fulfilled all the stipulations of the treaty he had concluded with the Genoese. The public property of the republic of Venice was confiscated, and the Genoese were put in possession of the palace previously occupied by the bailly of the Venetians. The turbulent conduct of his allies had already created dissatisfaction in the mind of Michael, when their defeat by the Venetians before Monemvasia, and the fall of Baccanegra, who had concluded the treaty of Nymphæum in 1261 by placing a party adverse to the Greek alliance in power, induced him to doubt the fidelity of their services, and he dismissed sixty Genoese galleys which he had taken into his pay. Charles of Anjou soon after effected the conquest of the kingdom of Naples, and the Genoese government became more anxious to cultivate his friendship than that of the Greek emperor.

The character and conduct of Michael VIII typifies the spirit of Greek society from the recovery of Constantinople to the fall of the empire. It displays a strange ignorance of the value of frankness and honesty in public business, a constant suspicion of every friend, restless intrigues to deceive every ally, and a wavering policy to conciliate every powerful enemy. The consequence of this suspicion, plotting, and weakness, was that very soon no one trusted either the emperor or the Greeks. The invasion of Italy by Charles of Anjou, and the pretensions of the pope to dispose of crowns, alarmed both Venice and Michael, and induced them to forget all former grounds of hostility, and conclude a closer alliance than the Greek emperor had concluded with Genoa, with which he now declared war. This treaty is dated in June, 1265, about a month before Charles of Anjou received the crown of the Two Sicilies from the pope in the Lateran. The stipulations are remarkable both in a political and commercial light. The emperor engaged to expel the Genoese from Constantinople, and not to conclude peace with them except in concert with the republic. The Venetians engaged to hire their galleys to the emperor to serve even against the pope, the king of France, and Charles of Anjou, as well as against the republics of Genoa, Pisa, and Ancona, and any prince or community that might attack the Greek Empire.

At length, in the year 1275, the emperor Michael formed a new alliance with the Genoese; but, in order to prevent their making the streets of Constantinople again the scene of their disorders, he obliged them to establish their factory at Heraclea, on the Propontis. Some years later they were allowed to transfer their settlement to Galata, forming a colony which soon deprived the Greeks of part of their trade in the Black Sea.

The morbid ambition of Michael Palæologus was not satisfied until he was sole emperor. In defiance, therefore, of the repeated oaths by which he had sworn to respect the rights of his ward, his colleague, and his sovereign

he availed himself of the first favourable moment to dethrone the unfortunate boy who had been left neglected at Nicæa. On Christmas Day, 1261, the agents of Michael deprived Joannes IV of his sight, though he had not attained the age of ten, and he was declared to have forfeited the throne. The cruel and perjured emperor then ordered him to be immured in the fort of Dacybiza, where he remained neglected, and almost forgotten, for eight-and-twenty years, when his solitude was broken in upon by Andronicus, the bigoted son of the hypocritical Michael. The conscience of the bigot was uneasy on account of his father's crimes, of which he was enjoying the fruit; so by a few kind words he easily induced his imprisoned victim to make what was falsely termed a voluntary cession of all his rights to the imperial crown. The evil consequences of this crime were deeply felt in the empire; for the clergy, the nobility, and the people, had all participated in the system of corruption and peculation by which Michael VIII had smoothed the way for his usurpation. The violation of every sentiment of honour, patriotism, and virtue was so iniquitous that the public character of the Greek nation was degraded by its obsequiousness on this occasion; and the feelings of the people in the provinces of the east, as well as in western Europe, avenged the misfortunes of Joannes. Michael Palæologus had hitherto been regarded as a bold, frank, and generous prince; he henceforward showed himself a timid, hypocritical, and cruel tyrant.

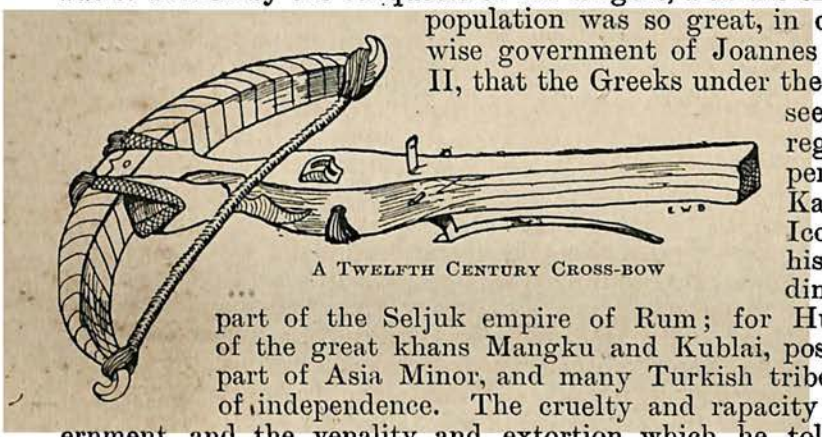
The patriarch Arsenius, who was one of the guardians of the dethroned emperor, considered himself bound to protest against the injustice and perjury of Michael. He convoked an assembly of the prelates resident in Constantinople, and proposed that the reigning emperor should be excommunicated by the synod; but too many of the clergy had been participators in the intrigues of Michael, and were enjoying the rewards of their subserviency, for such a measure to meet with any support. Arsenius, therefore, on his own authority as patriarch, interdicted Michael from all religious rites; but he did not venture to pronounce the usual form of words, which deprived him of the prayers of the orthodox. The Greek church, under the Palæologi, was tainted with the same spirit of half measures and base tergiversation which marks the imperial administration. The emperor accepted the modified censure of the church as just, and hypocritically requested that his penance might be assigned. By obtaining his dispensation in this manner, he expected that public opinion would render the church an accessary after the fact, while he secured to himself an additional guarantee for the enjoyment of the fruits of his crime. Confident in his power, he punished with cruelty all who ventured to express publicly their compassion for their dethroned emperor.

Though the family of Vatatzes had been unpopular among the nobility, it was beloved by the Asiatic Greeks, and especially by the mountaineers of Bithynia. The people in the vicinity of Nicæa took up arms to avenge Joannes IV, and their insurrection was suppressed with great difficulty. A blind boy, who was found wandering in the neighbourhood, was supposed to be their legitimate sovereign, the victim of Michael's treachery. The warlike peasantry flew to arms, and rendered themselves masters of the forts and mountain passes. The advance of the imperial troops sent to suppress the revolt was impeded by those famous archers who had previously formed one of the most effective bodies in the emperor's army. Every ravine was contested, and every advantage dearly purchased. The imperial troops at last subdued the country by adopting the policy by which the Turks extended their conquests. The habitations were destroyed, and the forests were burned down, so that the native population had no means of obtaining

subsistence, while the soldiers of Michael became masters of the country, under the cover of their widespread conflagrations. The resources of this flourishing province were ruined, and its population was so diminished that, when the Ottoman Turks attacked the empire, the renowned archers of Bithynia and the mountain militia had ceased to exist.

### THE PROVINCES OF THE EMPIRE

The change which is visible in the condition of the Asiatic provinces of the empire towards the end of the reign of Michael VIII must be attentively observed. When he mounted the throne, the power of the Seljuk empire was so broken by the conquests of the Moguls, and the energy of the Greek population was so great, in consequence of the wise government of Joannes III and Theodore II, that the Greeks under the Turkish dominion seemed on the eve of regaining their independence. Azeddin Kaikus II, sultan of Iconium, was an exile; his brother Rokneddin ruled only a small part of the Seljuk empire of Rum; for Hulaku, the brother of the great khans Mangku and Kublai, possessed the greater part of Asia Minor, and many Turkish tribes lived in a state of independence. The cruelty and rapacity of Michael's government, and the venality and extortion which he tolerated among the imperial officers and administrators, arrested the progress of the Greek nation, and prepared the way for its rapid decline. The jealousy which Michael showed of all marks of national independence, and the fear he entertained of opposition, are strong characteristics of his policy. So rapacious was the imperial treasury that the historian Pachymeres, though a courtier, believed that the emperor Michael systematically weakened the power of the Greek population from his fear of rebellion. The consequence was that the whole country beyond the Sangarius, and the mountains which give rise to the Rhyndacus and Macestus, were occupied by the Turks, who were often invited by the inhabitants to take possession of the small towns.



A Twelfth Century Cross-bow

As the reign of Michael VIII advanced, the encroachments of the nomad Turks became more daring. Joannes Palæologus, who had for some time restrained their incursions, was by his brother's jealousy deprived of all military command; and Andronicus, the emperor's eldest son, was sent to the frontier as commander-in-chief. In the year 1280 the incapacity of the young prince threw all the imperial provinces open to invasion. Nestongus, who commanded in the city of Nyssa, was defeated and taken prisoner. Nyssa was taken, and the Turks then laid siege to Tralles, which had been recently rebuilt and repeopled. The Turks at last formed a breach in the walls by sapping, and then carried the city by storm. The inhabitants who escaped the massacre were reduced to slavery.

About the same time Michael VIII usurped his place on the throne of the Greek Empire, a small Turkish tribe made its first appearance in the Seljuk empire. Othman, who gave his name to this new band of immigrants, is said to have been born in the year 1258, and his father, Ertogrul, entered

the Seljuk empire as the chief of only four hundred families; yet Orkhan, the son of Othman, laid the foundations of the institutions and power of the Ottoman empire. No nation ever increased so rapidly from such small beginnings, and no government ever constituted itself with greater sagacity than the Ottoman; but no force or prudence could have enabled this small tribe of nomads to rise with such rapidity to power, had it not been that the emperor Michael and the Greek nation were paralysed by political and moral corruption, and both left behind them descendants equally weak and worthless. When history records that Michael Palæologus recovered possession of Constantinople by accident, it ought also to proclaim that, by his deliberate policy, he prepared the way for the ruin of the Greek race and the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks. There is no other instance in history of a nation so numerous, so wealthy, and so civilised, as the Greeks were in the fourteenth century, having been permanently subdued by an enemy so inferior in political and military resources. The circumstance becomes the more disgraceful, as its explanation must be sought in social and moral causes.

The rebellion of his subjects in Asia made Michael anxious to secure peace in Europe. In order to counterbalance the successes of the despot of Epirus, and dispose him to conclude a treaty, Michael resolved to release the Prince of Achaia, who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Pelagonia in 1259. William Villehardouin, prince of Achaia, was freed, by the destruction of the Latin Empire of Romania, from those feudal ties which connected him with the throne of Baldwin II. To obtain his liberty, he consented to become a vassal of the Greek Empire, and he re-established the imperial power in the Peloponnesus, by delivering up to Michael the fortresses of Monemvasia, Misithra, and Maina. On swearing fidelity to Michael VIII he was released from captivity, after having remained a prisoner for three years. The pope, however, was so much alarmed at this example of a Catholic prince becoming a vassal of the Greek emperor, that as soon as the Prince of Achaia was firmly settled in his principality, his holiness absolved him from all his oaths and obligations to the Greek emperor. Pope Urban IV even went so far as to proclaim a crusade against Michael, and to invite St. Louis to take the command; but the king of France, who was much more deeply imbued with the Christian spirit than the pope, declined the office. The crusade ended in a partisan warfare between the prince of Achaia and the governors Michael had placed in the fortresses of which he had gained possession in the Peloponnesus.

The conquest of Naples by Charles of Anjou threatened the Greek Empire with a new invasion. Under the auspices of Clement IV a treaty was concluded between the dethroned emperor Baldwin, Charles of Anjou, and William, prince of Achaia, by which Baldwin ceded to Charles the suzerainty of Achaia, and the prince agreed to transfer his allegiance from the titular emperor to the king of Naples, who had already obtained the absolute sovereignty of Corfu, and of the cities of Epirus, given by the despot Michael II as dowry to his daughter, who married Manfred, king of Sicily. In return, Charles of Anjou engaged to furnish Baldwin with a force of two thousand knights and their followers, to enable him to invade the Greek Empire. This treaty was concluded at Viterbo on the 27th of May, 1267. Its stipulations alarmed Michael Palæologus, who had already involved himself in ecclesiastical quarrels with his subjects; and in order to delay an attack on Constantinople, he sent an embassy to Pope Clement IV, proposing measures for effecting a union of the Greek and Latin churches. On this occasion

[1271-1281 A.D.]

Michael was relieved from fear by Conradin's invasion of the kingdom of Naples, which enabled him to conclude a truce with the prince of Achaia. He then neglected his overtures to the pope, and turned all his attention to fitting out a fleet, which he manned with *gasmuli*, Tzaconians, and Greeks of the Archipelago. The insincere negotiations of Michael for a union with the Roman church were often renewed under the pressure of fear of invasion from abroad, and dread of insurrection at home. The weakness caused by the opposition of the Greek clergy and people to his authority, encouraged the enterprises of his foreign enemies; while the entangled web of his diplomacy, taking a new form at every change of his personal interests, at last involved him so inextricably in its meshes that he had no means of concealing his bad faith, cruelty, and hypocrisy.

In the year 1271 the treachery of Andronicus Tarchaniotes, the emperor's nephew, reanimated the war in Thessaly. Having invited the Tatars to invade the empire from the north, he abandoned Mount Hæmus, of which he was governor, to their ravages, and fled to Joannes Ducas, prince of the Vlakhs, his father-in-law, whom he persuaded to invade Thessaly. The emperor sent his brother, Joannes Palæologus, with an army of forty thousand men and a fleet of sixty-three galleys, to re-establish the imperial supremacy. Joannes Ducas was besieged in his capital, Neopatras, and the place was reduced to the last extremity, when the prince passed through the hostile camp in the disguise of a groom, to seek assistance from his Latin allies. Leading a horse by the bridle he walked along, crying out that his master had lost another horse, and would reward the finder. When he reached the plain of the Sperchius he mounted his horse, and gained the territory of the Frankish marquis of Boudonitza. The duke of Athens furnished him with a band of three hundred knights, and he returned to Neopatras with such celerity that he surprised the imperial camp, and completely dispersed the army. Joannes Palæologus escaped to Demetriades (Volo), where his fleet was stationed. A squadron composed of Venetian ships, and galleys of the duke of Naxos and of the barons of Negropont, was watching the imperial fleet. On hearing of the total defeat of the army they attacked the admiral Alexius Philanthropenus in the port, and were on the point of carrying the whole Greek fleet by boarding, when Joannes Palæologus reached the scene of action with a part of the fugitive troops. He immediately conveyed a large body of soldiers to the ships, and reanimated the sailors. The Latins were compelled to retire with the loss of some of their own ships, but they succeeded in carrying off several of the Greek galleys.

In the following year the imperial fleet, under the command of Zacharia, the Genoese seigneur of Thasos, defeated the Franks near Oreus in Eubœa and took Jean de la Roche, duke of Athens, prisoner. But, on the other hand, Joannes Ducas again routed the army in Thessaly, and by his activity and military skill rendered himself the most redoubted enemy of Michael; so that, when the majority of the Greek population declared openly against the emperor's project for a union with the Latin church, the prince of Wallachian Thessaly became the champion of the orthodox church, and assembled a synod which excommunicated Michael VIII (1277).

In the year 1278 Charles of Anjou would in all probability have besieged Constantinople, had he not been prevented by the express commands of his suzerain, Pope Nicholas III, who was gained over by Michael's submission to expect the immediate union of the Greek with the papal church. But the elevation of Martin IV to the see of Rome changed its policy. The emperor Michael was excommunicated, and, to render the excommunication

more insulting, he was reproached with persecuting the Greeks who consistently abstained from his own delusive compliances. Michael revenged himself by ceasing to pray for the pope in the Eastern churches.

A league was now formed between the pope, the king of Naples, and the republic of Venice, for the conquest of the Greek Empire, and a treaty was signed at Orvieto on the 3rd of July, 1281. The danger was serious. Charles of Anjou promised to furnish eight thousand cavalry, and the Venetians engaged to arm forty galleys, in order to commence operations in the spring of 1283. In the meantime a body of troops, under the command of Solimon Rossi, was despatched to occupy Dyrrhachium and assist the Albanians, who had recently revolted against Michael. This expedition proved unsuccessful; Rossi was taken prisoner while besieging Belgrade (Berat), and the Neapolitans and Albanians were completely defeated. But the Greek emperor could only intrigue to avert the great storm with which he was threatened by the treaty of Orvieto, and in the end he was saved by the deeds of others. The Sicilian Vespers delivered the Greeks from all further fear of Charles of Anjou and of a French invasion, and Michael was able to smile at the impotent rage of Martin IV, and despise his excommunications.

The vicinity of the Bulgarians, joined to their national power and influence over the numbers of their countrymen settled in the Greek Empire, gave Michael some uneasiness at the commencement of his reign. Constantine, king of Bulgaria, had married a sister of the dethroned emperor Joannes IV, and he was induced, by the feelings of his wife, by the intrigues of the fugitive sultan of Iconium, and by the hopes of assistance from the Mogul emperor, Hulaku, to attack the Greek Empire. Michael took the field against the Bulgarians, and in the year 1265 drove them beyond Mount Hæmus. A treaty which the emperor concluded with a powerful Tatar chief named Nogay, and civil dissension among the Bulgarians, relieved Michael from all serious danger on his northern frontier during the remainder of his reign. The affairs of Servia, also, gave the emperor very little trouble.

The period of Greek history embraced in the present chapter of this work, extending through the century and a half during which the empire of Constantinople was ruled with despotic sway by the dynasty of Palæologus, is the most degrading portion of the national annals. Literary taste, political honesty, patriotic feeling, military honour, civil liberty, and judicial purity, seem all to have abandoned the Greek race, and public opinion would in all probability have had no existence — it would certainly have found no mode of expression — had not the Greek church placed itself in opposition to the imperial government, and awakened in the breasts of the Greek people a spirit of partisanship on ecclesiastical questions which prepared the way for the open expression of the popular will, if not for the actual formation of public opinion. The church was converted into an arena where political and social discontent of every kind arrayed their forces under the banners of orthodoxy, heresy, or schism, as accident or passion might determine.

The anxiety of the emperor Michael VIII to be relieved from the ecclesiastical censures pronounced by the patriarch Arsenius against him, for his treachery to his pupil and sovereign Joannes IV, was the commencement of his disputes with the Greek church, and of his negotiations with the popes. Michael solicited the patriarch to impose some penance on him which might expiate his crime, but Arsenius could suggest nothing but reparation. The emperor considered this tantamount to a sentence of dethronement, and he

determined to depose Arsenius. Arsenius was deposed, and exiled to Proconnesus. Germanus, the bishop of Hadrianopolis, a mild and learned prelate, was named his successor.

Even in his banishment Arsenius was considered to be the lawful patriarch by the majority of the orthodox, and he was visited by thousands who were anxious to hear his words and receive his blessing. The emperor was eager to punish him, but his popularity rendered it dangerous to attempt doing so in an arbitrary way. A conspiracy was discovered against the emperor's life, and some of the accused, when put to the torture, declared that Arsenius was implicated in the plot. The examination of the affair was remitted to a synod, which gratified the emperor by excommunicating Arsenius without waiting for his conviction. Germanus interceded for his predecessor. Arsenius was absolved from the accusation, and a pension of three hundred bezants was allowed him for his subsistence, granted from the privy purse of the empress; for it was believed that Arsenius would accept nothing from the excommunicated emperor.

TWELFTH CENTURY KNIGHT, IN COAT OF MAIL

The courtiers of Michael were as active in their intrigues as the emperor. A party in the church declared that the election of Germanus was invalid, for he had been removed from the see of Hadrianopolis in violation of the canon which prohibits the translation of a bishop from one see to another. The emperor's confessor, Joseph, pronounced that the new patriarch could not grant a legal absolution to the emperor in consequence of this defect in his title to the patriarchal throne. Germanus soon perceived that both Michael and Joseph were encouraging opposition to his authority. He immediately resigned, and Joseph was named his successor. The emperor received his absolution as a matter of course. The ceremony was performed at the gates of St. Sophia's. Michael, nearly at the patriarch's feet, made his confession, and implored pardon. The patriarch read the form of absolution. This form was repeated by every bishop in succession, and the emperor knelt before each in turn and received his pardon. He was then admitted into the church, and partook of the Holy Communion. By this idle and pompous ceremony the Greeks believed that their church could pardon perjury and legitimatise usurpation.

About this time the treaty of Viterbo drew the attention of Michael from the schism of the Arsenites to foreign policy, and his grand object being to detach the pope from the alliance with Charles of Anjou, he began to form intrigues, by means of which he hoped to delude the pope into the persuasion that he was anxious and able to establish papal supremacy in the

Greek church ; while, on the other hand, he expected to cheat the Eastern clergy into making those concessions which he considered necessary for the success of his plans, on the ground that their compliance was a mere matter of diplomacy. Gregory X knew that it would be easier to effect the union of the Greek and Latin churches by the instrumentality of a Greek emperor than of a foreign conqueror. He therefore prohibited Charles of Anjou, who held the crown of Naples as his vassal, from invading the empire ; but he forced Michael, by fear of invasion, to assemble a synod at Constantinople, in which, by cruelty and violence, the emperor succeeded in obtaining an acknowledgment of the papal supremacy. The severest persecution was necessary to compel the Greeks to sign the articles of union, and many families emigrated to Wallachian Thessaly and to the empire of Trebizond. The union of the Greek and Latin churches was completed in the year 1274 at the Council of Lyons.[1]

When the news of this submission reached Constantinople there was a general expression of indignation. The patriarch Joseph, who opposed the union, was deposed, and Veccus, an ecclesiastic of eminence, who had recently become a convert to the Latin creed, was named in his place. The schisms in the Greek church were now multiplied, for Joseph became the head of a new party. Veccus, however, assembled a synod, and excommunicated those members of the Greek clergy who refused to recognise the pope as the head of the church of Christ. Nicephorus, despot of Epirus, and his brother, Joannes Ducas, prince of Wallachia, protected the orthodox. Both were excommunicated; and the emperor sent an army against Joannes Ducas, whose position in Thessaly threatened the tranquillity of Macedonia; but the imperial officers and troops showed no activity in a cause which they considered treason to their religion, and many of the emperor's own relations deserted.

By a series of intrigues, tergiversation, meanness, and cruelty, Michael succeeded in gaining his immediate object. Nicholas III, who ascended the papal throne in 1277, formally refused Charles of Anjou permission to invade the Greek Empire, and sent four nuncios to Constantinople to complete the union of the churches. The papal instructions are curious as an exposition of the political views of the court of Rome, and display astute diplomacy, acting at the suggestions of grasping ambition, but blinded by ecclesiastical bigotry. The first object was to induce all the dignitaries of the Greek church to sign the Roman formulary of doctrine, and to persuade them to accept absolution for having lived separate from the Roman communion; the second, to prevail on the emperor to receive a cardinal legate at Constantinople.

Before the arrival of the pope's ambassadors, the arbitrary conduct of Michael had involved him in a quarrel with his new patriarch, Veccus, whom he was on the point of deposing. All Michael's talents for intrigue were called into requisition, to prevent the Greek clergy from breaking out into open rebellion during the stay of the pope's ambassadors, and conceal the state of his relations with Veccus, who stood high at the court of Rome. Bribes, cajolery, and meanness on his part, and selfishness and subserviency on the part of the Eastern clergy, enabled him to succeed. But the death of Nicholas III in 1280 rendered his intrigues unavailable. Martin IV, a

[1] The ceremony took place on the 2nd February, 1267. — PACHYMERES,[d] I, 207. The power of Michael was despotic, and his conduct arbitrary in the extreme. To render Veccus and Xiphilinus amenable to his ecclesiastical reasoning, he ordered their houses to be destroyed and their vineyards to be rooted out. — PACHYMERES,[d] I, 151, 165.

Frenchman, devoted to the interests of Charles of Anjou, became pope. He openly displayed his hatred of the Greeks, and excommunicated Michael as a hypocrite, who concealed his heresy. While Martin IV openly negotiated the treaty of Orvieto, Michael secretly aided the conspiracy of Procida.

The condition of the Greek emperor was almost desperate. He was universally detested for his exactions and persecutions, and a numerous and bigoted party was ready to make any foreign attack the signal for a domestic revolution. The storm was about to burst on Michael's head, when the fearful tragedy of the Sicilian Vespers broke the power of Charles of Anjou.

Michael then quitted his capital to punish Joannes Ducas, whom he considered almost as a rival; but death arrested his progress at Pachomion, near Lysimachia in Thrace, on the 11th of December, 1282, after a reign of twenty-four years. He was a type of the Constantinopolitan Greek nobles and officials in the empire he re-established and transmitted to his descendants. He was selfish, hypocritical, able, and accomplished; an inborn liar, vain, meddling, ambitious, cruel, and rapacious. He is renowned in history as the restorer of the Eastern Empire; he ought to be execrated as the corrupter of the Greek race, for his reign affords a signal example of the extent to which a nation may be degraded by the misconduct of its sovereign, when it entrusts him with despotic power.

## ANDRONICUS II (1282-1325 A.D.)

Andronicus II ascended the throne at the age of twenty-four, having been born about the time his father received the imperial crown at Nicæa. He had most of the defects of his father's character, without his personal dignity and military talents. In youth he was destitute of vigour, in old age of prudence. His administration was marked by the same habits of cunning and falsehood which had distinguished his father's conduct; and the consequence was that, towards the end of his long reign, he was as generally despised as his father had been hated. In his private character he was arbitrary, peevish, and religious; in his public administration despotic, fond of meddling, industrious, and inconsequent.

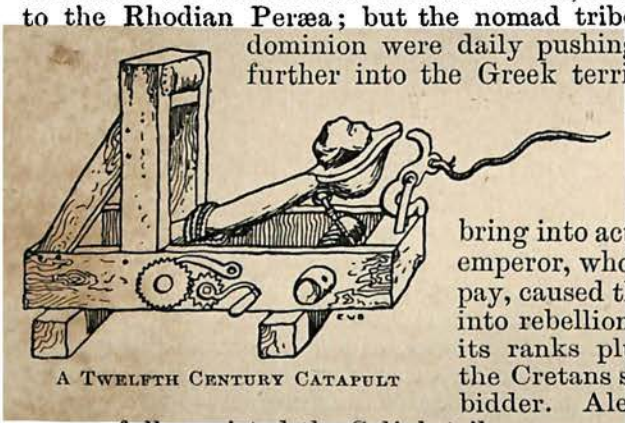
Andronicus, eager to efface the stain of his own sinful compliance with the union of the churches, allowed the body of his father to be deprived of the usual funeral honours and public prayers. The empress, Michael's widow, was compelled to abjure the union, and to approve of the indignities to his memory, before her own name was inserted in the public prayers for the imperial family. The patriarch Veccus was forced to resign, and his predecessor Joseph was reinstated on the patriarchal throne.

The bigotry of Andronicus induced him to sanction the establishment of a tribunal consisting chiefly of monks, which was empowered to fix the penance to be performed by those who desired to obtain absolution from a general sentence of excommunication, launched against all who had communicated with the Latin church. As nearly the whole population of the empire had fallen under this sentence of excommunication, the power of the tribunal was unlimited. The rich were mulcted according to the sensibility of their conscience and the malice of their enemies, while ecclesiastics obnoxious to the bigots were suspended from the exercise of their functions.[1]

[1] We may here omit, as more properly belonging to religious history, the procession of patriarchs whom Andronicus raised to power and who fairly cudgelled one another with excommuni-

During the earlier years of the reign of Andronicus the power of the Turks excited no alarm. The garrisons in the frontier fortresses were reduced, the number of the legions was diminished, and many of the ships kept ready for service by Michael VIII were laid up in the arsenal. Andronicus required all the money he could divert from the military and naval services for the court and the church. The officers could only gain advancement by becoming courtiers; the soldiers could only avoid neglect by becoming monks. The army of Andronicus consisted principally of Alans, Gasmuls, Turks, Turkopuls, and refugee Cretans. The Alans received double the pay of the best native troops. The armies with which the emperors of Nicæa had defeated the Turkish Sultans, the Latin emperors, the kings of Bulgaria, and the French knights of Achaia and Athens were now disbanded and neglected. The state maxim of imperial Rome that no man who paid the land tax should be allowed to bear arms, was again revived, and mercenaries and Turks plundered the Greek Empire, as the Goths and Huns had plundered the Roman.

The Greek Empire of Constantinople, at the accession of Andronicus II, embraced the whole coast of Asia Minor, from the mouth of the Sangarius to the Rhodian Peræa; but the nomad tribes who lived under the Seljuk dominion were daily pushing their incursions further and further into the Greek territories. In the year 1296, the regular army of the empire continued to maintain a decided superiority in the field over any force the Turks could bring into action; but the carelessness of the emperor, who left the troops in Asia without pay, caused this neglected army to break out into rebellion. The Turkish mercenaries in its ranks plundered the Greek landlords; the Cretans sold their services to the highest bidder. Alexius Philanthropenus, who had successfully resisted the Seljuk tribes, was proclaimed emperor by his rebellious troops, but allowed himself to be taken prisoner, and was deprived of sight. His successor, Joannes Tarchaniotes vainly attempted to reform the abuses, which rendered the army more oppressive to the emperor's subjects than dangerous to his enemies. The anarchy that prevailed in the civil, military, and ecclesiastical administration, rendered him powerless, and he was compelled to abandon the undertaking.


A Twelfth Century Catapult

In the year 1301, Michael, the eldest son of Andronicus, who had received the imperial title from his father in 1295, took the command of the army in Asia; and about the same time a body of veteran warriors entered the imperial service, who, under an able general, would have secured victory to the Greeks. Andronicus allowed a colony of Alans to settle in his dominion, and about eight thousand, who had served in the Tatar wars beyond the Danube, were enrolled in the Byzantine service. After a short

cations. Veccus was deposed for Joseph, who yielded to Gregorius, against whom the Arsenites conspired; he fell, and Athanasius lasted four years, leaving wholesale excommunication in a jar, which was not found for four years, and caused immense confusion and terror until Athanasius said he had revoked it some years before as secretly as he had invoked it. He was then restored for a time, till he was forced out for Nephon, who set a better table than the emperor. Glycys followed, and then Gerasimus, who was chosen because he was old and deaf, but he died in a year. His successor was Isaiah, whose failure to be compliant brought on many of the troubles of the later civil wars.]

[1301 A.D.]

term of service, they mutinied, deserted the camp and marched to the Hellespont, plundering the Greek inhabitants of the country they passed through. The young emperor then broke up his own camp, and, abandoning his headquarters at Magnesia on the Hermus, retired to Pergamus, leaving the Turkish tribes to extend their plundering expeditions as far as Adramyttium, Lampsacus, and Cyzicus.

About the same time the Venetians and Genoese, who were carrying on war, were so emboldened by the weakness of the Greek Empire and the neglected state of its marine that they pursued their hostilities in the port of Constantinople, while private vessels plundered the islands of the Propontis within sight of the palace of Andronicus, and compelled him to ransom the captive inhabitants by parading them before the walls of the capital, suspended from the rigging of their ships.

Rapid conquests were now made by the Seljuk emirs and a destructive warfare against the Greek race was carried on by the nomad tribes, who were more anxious to exterminate the agricultural population than to subdue them. The Greeks were everywhere in despair. In the empire of Trebizond, matters were not much better than in the empire of Constantinople. But it was in the provinces between Nicomedia and Smyrna, along the Propontis and the Ægean, that the greatest confusion reigned. The roads to the coast were covered with fugitives from the interior, endeavouring to save their property and families. Thousands were left to perish from want, and thousands died from suffering. Whole provinces were deserted by their inhabitants, and became pasture lands for hordes of Turkomans. In the course of a single generation, the Greek race and language disappeared from countries in which it had been spoken for two thousand years, and Turkish colonies took possession of Æolis and Ionia. Andronicus II witnessed these dreadful calamities with feelings benumbed by piety; even the extermination of the orthodox failed to animate his energy.

After twelve years of preparation, Othman ventured to attack the regular army of the Greek Empire, in the year 1301. The action took place at Baphæon, near Nicomedia. Pachymeres estimates the number of the imperial troops commanded by Muzalon at only two thousand, while the forces of Othman consisted of five thousand. The Greek infantry fled, and their misconduct was attributed to the dissatisfaction caused by the manner in which they had been deprived of their horses. The Alans fought bravely and covered the retreat to Nicomedia. Othman now laid waste the whole of Bithynia, from Nicomedia to Lopadion. The suburbs of the town on the Asiatic shores of the Bosporus were burned by the Ottomans, whose foraging parties were sometimes visible from the towers of the imperial palace in Constantinople.

The disgraceful retreat of his son Michael to Peges, induced Andronicus to change the military governors in Asia, instead of teaching him the necessity of reforming the military system. The command of Nicomedia was entrusted to a Tatar chief who had recently embraced Christianity; and by the marriage of this Tatar's daughter with Suleiman, a Turkish emir, peace was restored to a small district and a barrier was formed against the incursions of Othman. But the unemployed Turkish troops transferred their services to other leaders, and carried on their incursions in more distant provinces. This preference of a Tatar general indicates a deep-rooted distrust of the courage and fidelity of the Greek nobles, as well as contempt for their military skill; and, indeed, a factious spirit, directed to personal interest, could alone have caused the insensibility to national honour which

made the nobles and the troops submit tamely to the insults they received from their emperor. Well might the brave old Spaniard Muntaner declare that God had stricken the Greek race with his curse, for every one could trample them down.

A new crisis in the fate of the Byzantine Empire suddenly presented itself by the arrival of an army of Spaniards, composed chiefly of Catalans and men of Aragon; but this race of strangers, hitherto unknown in the East, soon disappeared from the scene. They came and departed as if they were under the guidance of the destroying angel. In daring courage, steady discipline, and military skill, they were not surpassed by any Greek or Roman army. Their warlike deeds entitled them to rank as a host of heroes; their individual acts made them appear a band of demons. They had proved invincible on every field of battle. They had broken the lances of the chivalry of France in many a well-fought action; and they were firmly convinced that no troops on earth could encounter their shock. Guided by a sovereign like Leo III, or like Basil II, they might have conquered the Seljuk Turks, strangled the Ottoman power in its cradle, and carried the double-headed eagle of Byzantium victorious to the foot of Mount Taurus, and to the banks of the Danube, but Andronicus could neither make use of their valour, nor secure their obedience. His own senseless intrigues roused their hostile feelings; and after they had made every tribe in the Seljuk empire tremble for a moment, they turned on the Greek Empire, where they carried on their inhuman ravages with a degree of cruelty and rapacity which history cannot attempt to portray. They laid both the empire and the Greek nation prostrate in the dust, bleeding with wounds from which they never recovered.

The Catalan Grand Company — for that is the name by which this Spanish army is known in the Eastern history — consisted of troops formed in the twenty years' war that followed the Sicilian Vespers.[c]

### THE CATALAN GRAND COMPANY

After the peace of Sicily many thousands of Genoese, Catalans, etc., who had fought by sea and land under the standard of Anjou or Aragon, were blended into one nation by the resemblance of their manners and interest. They heard that the Greek provinces of Asia were invaded by the Turks; they resolved to share the harvest of pay and plunder, and Frederick king of Sicily most liberally contributed the means of their departure. In a warfare of twenty years, a ship or a camp was become their country; arms were their sole profession and property; valour was the only virtue which they knew; their women had imbibed the fearless temper of their lovers and husbands; it was reported that, with a stroke of their broad-swords, the Catalans could cleave a horseman and a horse; and the report itself was a powerful weapon.

Roger de Flor was the most popular of their chiefs; and his personal merit overshadowed the dignity of his prouder rivals of Aragon. The offspring of a marriage between a German gentleman of the court of Frederick the Second and a damsel of Brindisi, Roger was successively a templar, an apostate, a pirate, and at length the richest and most powerful admiral of the Mediterranean. He sailed from Messina (Messana) to Constantinople, with eighteen galleys, four great ships, and eight thousand adventurers; and his previous treaty was faithfully accomplished by Andronicus the elder, who accepted with joy and terror this formidable succour. A palace

was allotted for his reception, and a niece of the emperor was given in marriage to the valiant stranger, who was immediately created great duke or admiral of Romania. After a decent repose, he transported his troops over the Propontis, and boldly led them against the Turks; in two bloody battles thirty thousand of the Moslems were slain; he raised the siege of Philadelphia, and deserved the name of the deliverer of Asia.

But after a short season of prosperity, the cloud of slavery and ruin again burst on that unhappy province. The inhabitants escaped (says a Greek historian) from the smoke into the flames; and the hostility of the Turks was less pernicious than the friendship of the Catalans. The lives and fortunes which they had rescued, they considered as their own; the willing or reluctant maid was saved from the race of circumcision for the embraces of a Christian soldier; the exaction of fines and supplies was enforced by licentious rapine and arbitrary executions; and, on the resistance of Magnesia, the great duke besieged a city of the Roman Empire. These disorders he excused by the wrongs and passions of a victorious army; nor would his own authority or person have been safe had he dared to punish his faithful followers, who were defrauded of the just and covenanted price of their services.

The threats and complaints of Andronicus disclosed the nakedness of the empire. His golden bull had invited no more than five hundred horse and a thousand foot soldiers; yet the crowds of volunteers, who migrated to the East, had been enlisted and fed by his spontaneous bounty. While his bravest allies were content with three byzants, or pieces of gold, for their monthly pay, an ounce or even two ounces of gold were assigned to the Catalans, whose annual pension would thus amount to near £100 sterling; one of their chiefs had modestly rated at three hundred thousand crowns the value of his future merits; and above a million had been issued from the treasury for the maintenance of these costly mercenaries. A cruel tax had been imposed on the corn of the husbandman; one-third was retrenched from the salaries of the public officers; and the standard of the coin was so shamefully debased that of the four-and-twenty parts only five were of pure gold.

At the summons of the emperor, Roger evacuated a province which no longer supplied the materials of rapine; but he refused to disperse his troops; and while his style was respectful, his conduct was independent and hostile. The grand duke of Romania condescended to accept the title and ornaments of cæsar; but he rejected the new proposal of the government of Asia with a subsidy of corn and money, on condition that he should reduce his troops to the harmless number of three thousand men. Assassination is the last resource of cowards. The cæsar was tempted to visit the royal residence of Hadrianopolis; in the apartment, and before the eyes of the empress, he was stabbed by the Alan guards (1307).

The loss of their leader intimidated the crowd of adventurers, who hoisted the sails of flight and were soon scattered round the coasts of the Mediterranean. But a veteran band of fifteen hundred Catalans, or French, stood firm in the strong fortress of Gallipoli on the Hellespont, displayed the banners of Aragon, and offered to revenge and justify their chief by an equal combat of ten or a hundred warriors. Instead of accepting this bold defiance, the emperor Michael, the son and colleague of Andronicus, resolved to oppress them with the weight of multitudes; every nerve was strained to form an army of thirteen thousand horse and thirty thousand foot, and the Propontis was covered with the ships of the Greeks and Genoese. In two battles by sea and land, these mighty forces were encountered and overthrown

by the despair and discipline of the Catalans; the young emperor fled to the palace; and an insufficient guard of light horse was left for the protection of the open country.

Victory renewed the hopes and numbers of the adventurers; every nation was blended under the name and standard of the Grand Company; and three thousand Turkish proselytes deserted from the imperial service to join this military association. In the possession of Gallipoli the Catalans intercepted the trade of Constantinople and the Black Sea, while they spread their devastations on either side of the Hellespont over the confines of Europe and Asia. To prevent their approach, the greatest part of the Byzantine territory was laid waste by the Greeks themselves; the peasants and their cattle retired into the city: and myriads of sheep and oxen, for which neither place nor food could be procured, were unprofitably slaughtered on the same day. Four times the emperor Andronicus sued for peace, and four times he was inflexibly repulsed, till the want of provisions and the discord of the chiefs compelled the Catalans to evacuate the banks of the Hellespont and the neighbourhood of the capital. After their separation from the Turks, the remains of the great company pursued their march through Macedonia and Thessaly, to seek a new establishment in the heart of Greece.[b]

At this point we may take a glance briefly at the history of Athens, which fell into the hands of the Catalans.[a]

## The Duchy of Athens

In the partition of the empire in 1204 the principality of Athens and Thebes had been assigned to Otto de la Roche, a noble warrior of Burgundy, with the title of "great duke," which the Latins understood in their own sense, and the Greeks more foolishly derived from the age of Constantine. Otto followed the standard of the marquis of Montferrat; the ample state which he acquired by a miracle of conduct or fortune was peaceably inherited by his son and two grandsons, till the family, though not the nation, was changed, by the marriage of an heiress into the elder branch of the house of Brienne.

### WALTER DE BRIENNE AND CEPHISUS

The son of that marriage, Walter de Brienne, succeeded to the duchy of Athens; and with the aid of some Catalan mercenaries, whom he invested with fiefs, he successively reduced above thirty castles of the vassal or neighbouring lords.

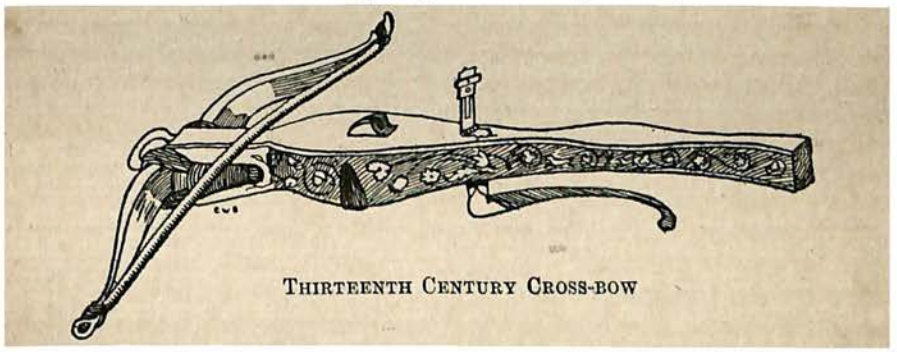
But when informed of the approach and ambition of the great company, he collected a force of seven hundred knights, sixty-four hundred horse, and eight thousand foot, and boldly met them on the banks of the river Cephisus in Bœotia, March 15, 1311. The Catalans amounted to no more than thirty-five hundred horse, and four thousand foot; but the deficiency of numbers was compensated by stratagem and order. They formed round their camp an artificial inundation; the duke and his knights advanced without fear or precaution on the verdant meadow; their horses plunged into the bog; and he was cut in pieces, with the greatest part of the French cavalry. His family and nation were expelled; and his son Walter de Brienne, the titular duke of Athens, the tyrant of Florence, and the constable of France, lost his life in the field of Poitiers.

Attica and Bœotia were the rewards of the victorious Catalans; they married the widows and daughters of the slain; and during fourteen years the great company was the terror of the Grecian states. Their factions drove them to acknowledge the sovereignty of the house of Aragon; and, during the remainder of the fourteenth century, Athens, as a government or an appanage, was successively bestowed by the kings of Sicily. After the French and Catalans, the third dynasty was that of the Acciajuoli, a family plebeian at Florence, potent at Naples, and sovereign in Greece. Athens, which they embellished with new buildings, became the capital of a state that extended over Thebes, Argos, Corinth, Delphi, and a part of Thessaly; and their reign was finally determined by Muhammed II, who strangled the last duke and educated his sons in the discipline and religion of the seraglio.[b]

To return now to the affairs of the Byzantine emperors.

## ANDRONICUS II TO THE RESTORATION OF THE PALÆOLOGI (1311-1355 A.D.)

The Turkish auxiliaries returned home after the battle of Cephisus, 1311, in order to enjoy the wealth they had amassed in the expedition. The emperor Andronicus allowed them to pass through the empire unmolested, on condition that they refrain from every act of pillage, and they reached the shore of the Hellespont, escorted by a corps of three thousand



THIRTEENTH CENTURY CROSS-BOW

Greek cavalry. The imperial government could never act either with honesty or boldness. A plot was framed to disarm the Turks as they were waiting for vessels to transport them over to Asia; but the Greeks were now so universally distrusted that their plots had little chance of succeeding, for everybody suspected their treachery and watched their proceedings. The Turks learned their danger, surprised a neighbouring fort, and commenced plundering the country. The emperor Michael attacked them with the Greek army, but defeat was his invariable companion. Khalil, the Turkish general, was a soldier formed in the severe discipline of the Catalan camp; his superior generalship and the perfect tactics of his troops gained a complete victory. The camp, baggage, and imperial crown of Michael became the spoil of the conquerors. Khalil gleaned the remains of the Catalan ravages.

Philes Palæologus, a man remarkable for his virtue, afflicted by the sufferings of his fellow-countrymen, solicited the emperor for permission to serve against the Turks. Andronicus, though he placed more confidence in his piety than in the military operations he proposed, conferred on him the office of protostrator and authorised him to levy an army. The success of Philes proves that the ruin of the empire was caused by the folly of

Andronicus and the corruption of the government. Philes enrolled only veteran Greek soldiers, and selected officers of experience, without reference to birth and court favour. Constant exercise and strict discipline soon restored the spirit of the Byzantine army, and Philes led his men to encounter a plundering expedition of the Turks in the vicinity of Bizya, commanded by Khalil in person. A bloody battle ensued, for the Turks were too much accustomed to vanquish the Greeks to yield without a desperate contest. Philes, however, remained master of the field, and followed up his success with such vigour that he soon besieged the Turks in their fortified camp, while the Byzantine fleet, aided by eight Genoese galleys, blockaded them by sea. After a fierce struggle, the camp was taken; the greater part of the Turks were slain by the Greeks: the remainder were sold as slaves by the Genoese. The affair occurred in the year 1315. It may be considered as the last scene of the Catalan expedition, so that for twelve years the greater part of the Greek Empire of Constantinople had been plundered and devastated by the Catalan Grand Company and its Turkish auxiliaries.

Other enemies had taken advantage of the weakness of the empire during this calamitous period. The Seljuk Turks had almost completed the conquest of Asia Minor; the Ottomans had extended their possessions on the southern shores of the Propontis; the Genoese arrogated to themselves the possession of several cities and islands, and various chiefs seized different towns that were left without garrisons to defend them, and lived in a state of piratical independence. Every bond of society appeared to be dissolved in the countries inhabited by the Greek race, and every stranger, whether Mussulman or Christian, thought himself strong enough to subdue the Greeks.

The most important conquest of the time, however, was that of Rhodes, by the Knights Hospitaller of St. John of Jerusalem, both from its durability and from the renown of the conquerors. Andronicus sent an army to raise the siege; but his troops were defeated, and the knights took the city of Rhodes on the 15th of August, 1310. As sovereigns of this beautiful island they were long the bulwark of Christian Europe against the Turkish power; and the memory of the chivalrous youth who, for successive ages, found an early tomb at this verge of the Christian world, will long shed a romantic colouring on the history of Rhodes. They sustained the declining glory of a state of society that was hastening to become a vision of the past; they were the heroes of a class of which the Norse sea-kings had been the demigods. The little realm they governed as an independent state consisted of Rhodes, with the neighbouring islands of Cos, Calymnos, Syme, Leros, Nisyros, Telos, and Chalce; on the opposite continent they possessed the classic city of Halicarnassus, and several strong forts, of which the picturesque ruins still overhang the sea.

The emperor Andronicus II displayed the same want of sound judgment and right feeling in his private that he did in his public conduct, and his latter days were embittered by family disputes caused by his own folly and injustice. His second wife, Irene of Montferrat, persecuted him with demands to dismember the empire, in order to form appanages for her children. Andronicus resisted her solicitations at the expense of a quarrel, and Irene long lived separated from him at Thessalonica. The emperor Michael allowed his father to control the arrangements of his family and regulate his private actions. Michael's eldest son was named Andronicus. He was the third emperor of the name who occupied the Byzantine throne,

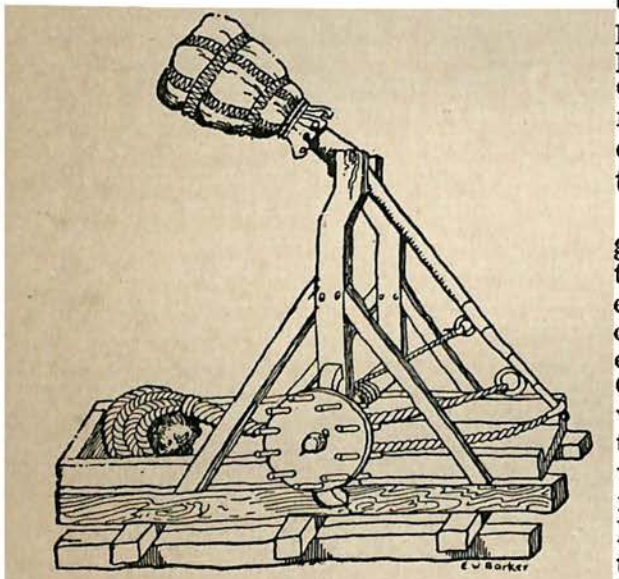
but he is known in history generally as Andronicus the Younger. When a child, he was an especial favourite with his grandfather, who directed his education. That education was undoubtedly a mixture of unwise indulgence and capricious restraint. The young Andronicus grew up a dissipated youth, and his debauched habits produced a terrible tragedy in his family. He was informed that his favourite mistress admitted another lover, and he employed bravos to waylay his rival. It happened that on that very night his own brother Manuel hastened quickly to the lady's house, where he expected to find Andronicus. The assassins mistook the despot for the lover, and Manuel was murdered on the spot. The dreadful news reached their father Michael at Thessalonica, where he was residing in a declining state of health. Anguish soon terminated his life (1320).

The young Andronicus was now heir-apparent to the empire, if the expression be admissible in a state without a fixed order of hereditary succession. But the murder of Manuel changed the affection of the old emperor into implacable hatred, and it was generally thought that the reigning sovereign had the power of naming his successor. The emperor Michael VIII had introduced the custom that a new oath of allegiance should be taken, whenever a change occurred in the order of succession. When Michael, the son of Andronicus II, died, the new oath was administered in the name of Andronicus II alone, and did not contain that of Andronicus III, who was the direct heir. It also contained a clause promising implicit obedience to whomsoever he might declare emperor. These circumstances indicated that he intended to exclude his grandson from the throne; nor was he long in selecting a favourite on whom it was supposed he intended to confer the imperial title. The choice was marked by the singular perverseness which characterised many of his most important acts. He had compelled his second son Constantine to marry the daughter of his favourite minister, Muzalon. The incidents of this union were both ridiculous and disgraceful. The lady had been destined to be the bride of Theodore, the emperor's brother, when it was discovered that she had already indulged in illicit intercourse with one of her relatives, and would have presented the imperial family very prematurely with an intruder. Theodore broke off the match; but the emperor, moved by his attachment to the father, and by the penitence of the fair sinner, subsequently compelled his own son Constantine to marry her. The young prince thought himself entitled to have a bastard as well as his wife. The youth was named Michael Catharus, and became so great a favourite with his grandfather, the emperor Andronicus, that he showed a disposition to adopt him as the heir to the empire, but the representations of his ministers prevented this act of folly.

The government of the old emperor was now generally unpopular; and as he was suspected of being anxious to prevent his grandson Andronicus from succeeding to the throne, the cause of the prince was made the rallying-point of the discontented. The most distinguished partisans of Andronicus the Younger were Cantacuzenus the historian, a man of the highest rank, of extensive connections among the Byzantine aristocracy, of great wealth, ability, and military as well as literary accomplishments, but devoured by ambition, and overflowing with cunning and self-conceit; Synadenus, a man of equal rank and talent; and Sir Janni, a man of superior boldness and ability, but with a want of fixed principles and steady conduct that gave him the character of a political adventurer. With these it is necessary to mention Apocaucus, who was the ablest administrator and financier of the

party. The intrigues of the partisans of the young prince did not escape the attention of the emperor's ministers, who would, doubtless, have maintained order by arresting the most dangerous, had not Andronicus been more anxious to punish his grandson, by depriving him of all chance of succeeding to the empire, than to prevent a rebellion. He now resolved to bring the prince to a public trial; and on Palm Sunday, 1321, the young Andronicus was unexpectedly summoned to the palace of Blachernæ. His partisans comprehended that the crisis of their own fate, as well as that of the prince, must be decided before sunset. Cantacuzenus and Synadenus accordingly assembled their followers, and filled the palace with a force that so completely intimidated both the judges and the emperor that the prince was pardoned, and a feigned reconciliation took place between the grandfather and the grandson.

Andronicus II resolved to remove Cantacuzenus and Synadenus from his grandson's society, for he justly considered them as the authors of the plots against his government. Cantacuzenus was named governor of Thessaly, and Synadenus was sent to Prilapos. These officers collected as many troops as they were able under the pretence of repairing to their posts; and when their levies were completed they marched to Hadrianopolis, where the young Andronicus joined them and raised the standard of rebellion.



A Fourteenth Century Catapult

The prince was popular; he gained the people by proclaiming that the province of Thrace was exempt from some of the most onerous taxes, and his mercenaries enabled him to advance against Constantinople. But his soldiers, who cared little for political questions, pillaged the inhabitants wherever they passed; bands of robbers began to lay waste the villages which had escaped destruction from the Catalans and the Turks, and the collectors of the public revenue, availing themselves of these disorders, embezzled the money in their hands. Cantacuzenus says that the young Andronicus was averse to march against his grandfather, fearing lest his army should storm Constantinople. In order, therefore, to prevent his grandfather from being dethroned, he wrote secretly to the old emperor to advise that measures might be concerted to turn aside the first ardour of his own troops. A treaty was concluded at Rhegium, where the prince had established his headquarters, by which the rights of Andronicus the Younger to the succession of the empire were recognised, and he was invested with the government of Thrace from Selymbria to Christopolis as his appanage.

This peace was of very short duration. The exactions of the prince's troops, and the intrigues of Sir Janni and the emperor induced several cities of Thrace to desert the party of the young Andronicus. Heraclea received an imperial garrison, and the prince, finding that his cause was losing ground, assembled his army and laid siege to the city in November, 1321. His troops

had clamoured for the renewal of the war during the summer; they were averse to keep the field in winter, so that, when the attack on Heraclea was defeated, the prince marched up to the walls of Constantinople. He had now few partisans in the capital, and he was soon compelled to retire into winter quarters at Didymoteichos. A new treaty of peace was concluded at Epibates in July, 1322, which removed some of the causes of dissatisfaction to both parties.

On the 2nd of February, 1325, Andronicus the Younger received the imperial crown. This may be considered a proof that the ministers of the emperor had persuaded him to stifle all his resentment, and lay aside his schemes for excluding his grandson from the throne. But in the following year the two emperors allowed the city of Prusa to be taken by the Ottoman Turks, without either making an effort to relieve it. This fact seemed to prove that neither could allow his best officers and troops to succour this important city, lest his colleague should take advantage of their absence. Intrigues followed intrigues.

The civil war was renewed under circumstances extremely unfavourable to the old emperor, whose conduct rendered it inevitable. The people were universally disgusted with his despotism and injustice, and the young Andronicus seems to have expected that they would have immediately admitted him into Constantinople. Finding that this could not be effected, he hastened into Macedonia in the midst of winter, leaving the protostrator Synadenus to blockade the capital. Liberal promises of reduced taxation, and the assurance that all arrears due to the imperial treasury should be cancelled, insured his entry into most of the towns, and rendered his march a triumph. Thessalonica, Edessa, Castoria, Berœa, Pelagonia, Achrida, and Deabolis, opened their gates. The krall [king] of Servia, who consulted his own interest, refused to assist the officers of the reigning emperor, and took advantage of the confusion to gain possession of the frontier fortress of Prosacon. Strumbitza and Melenicon were the only strong places that remained in the possession of the partisans of Andronicus II.

While these events happened, Synadenus gained a complete victory over the garrison of Constantinople, on its making an attempt to raise the blockade. When the news of this victory reached Andronicus, he hastened to the army before the walls of the capital. Treasonable assistance was soon secured, and on the night of Monday, May 23rd, 1328, a party of soldiers scaled the walls; the garrison joined in proclaiming Andronicus III; the gates were thrown open, and the young emperor marched directly to the imperial palace to assure his grandfather that, though he had ceased to govern, he would be treated with all the honour due to a sovereign prince.

Two years after the taking of Constantinople, Andronicus III was attacked by a serious illness, and his ministers feared lest his grandfather might again recover the throne. To prevent the possibility of this event, Synadenus compelled the old man to become a monk, and to sign a declaration that he would never again mount the throne, nor pretend to dispose of the empire in case of his grandson's death. Andronicus II had already lost the use of his eyes, and this, his last public act, was signed with two crosses, one in red ink as emperor and another in black as a humble monk. The patriarch Isaiah sent to congratulate him on his change of life: the petulant old man regarded this message as an insult, and sent back some violent and probably not unjust reproaches to the head of the church. His name continued to be mentioned in the public prayers as the most religious and most Christian basileus, the monk Antony. One evening, after a literary party at which

his daughter Simonida was present, he was suddenly seized with an illness which soon terminated his life. He expired on the 13th day of February, 1332, in the seventy-fourth year of his age.

Andronicus II was a man who, with few personal vices, possessed many of the worst qualities of a sovereign. He had capacity enough to direct the whole civil and ecclesiastical business of the empire, but was destitute of the judgment necessary to direct it well. He rarely took a right step, and never at the proper time; so that his petulant pride and pedantic despotism proved more ruinous to the empire than the worst vices of many of his predecessors. His ecclesiastical bigotry especially served as an instrument of providence for effecting the ruin and degradation of the orthodox Eastern church, and of the Greek race. That the Greeks allowed themselves to be so long misled and oppressed by so worthless and weak a sovereign, may perhaps be accepted as a proof that the nation was sunk in selfishness and bigotry like the emperor.[c]

Andronicus III, now absolute monarch, showed great bravery against the Turks, but he could not stay their progress in Anatolia, nor prevent their descents on Europe. Neither could he complete the conquest of Epirus nor live at peace with his neighbours on the peninsula.

He died in 1341, leaving his son, Joannes V (Palæologus), a minor, under the regency of his wife, Anne of Savoy. The lord chamberlain, Cantacuzenus, affected at first to protect them, but his protégés soon found him too powerful. They got up scandals about him, imprisoned his relatives, allowed the houses of his partisans to be destroyed. These latter forced him to take the crown under the title of Joannes VI. Civil war again broke out in the empire. Cantacuzenus allied himself with Stephen, krall of Servia, and with Omur Beg, the Seljuk emir of Ionia. Anne of Savoy asked help from the latter's rival, Orkhan, sultan of the Ottomans.

Intrigue alternated with massacre. Cantacuzenus contrived to gain over this same Orkhan by giving him his daughter Theodora. On both sides the infidels were authorised to carry off Byzantine subjects, and the ports and vessels of the empire were placed at their disposal to enable them to transport their captives into Asia. The foreigners took advantage of the general anarchy to oppress the provinces and towns. The krall of Servia conquered Macedonia as far as Pheræ, and called himself czar of the Greeks and Servians. The Genoese retook Chios, which Andronicus III had seized from them, and blockaded Constantinople, defended by other Italians, under Facciolati.

The latter, whilst the empress was giving a banquet to her partisans, opened the Golden Gate to Cantacuzenus. Anne was obliged to come to an agreement. It was arranged that Cantacuzenus should be emperor first, but only for ten years; that is, until Joannes V attained his twenty-first year. The partisans of neither side were satisfied with this transaction.

So feeble was the empire that the Genoese ventured to impose their own will in the very capital. Cantacuzenus had tried to reconstruct an Hellenic navy, and attempted to bring a little life into the port of Byzantium by lowering the port dues. The Genoese considered this injurious to their Galatian colony. They massacred the crew of a Grecian ship, and exacted that a large territory adjoining Galata should be ceded to them. A war followed, which lasted four years (1348–1352). To fight the Genoese the Greeks had called in Venetian and Catalan fleets. A bloody naval battle was fought under the very walls of the town, and the Greeks were victorious. Cantacuzenus had to capitulate (May 6, 1352) and give them all they demanded.

Civil war also soon recommenced. The whole country was horribly ravaged. An Ottoman army under Suleiman (Solyman), son of Orkhan and in Cantacuzenus' pay, carried off the inhabitants by thousands. Joannes V was despoiled of his authority and private domains; in the room of the fallen prince, Matthias, son of Joannes VI, was associated with his father and crowned emperor at St. Sophia (1354). Then, in 1355, with the concurrence of Francesco Gattilusio and other Genoese, Palæologus surprised and entered Constantinople. He had to negotiate.

Joannes V and Joannes VI continued to live in the palace with equal authority. Matthias was to keep the crown for life, as well as Hadrianopolis. Lesbos had ceded its full sovereignty to Gattilusio (1355).

Joannes VI did not feel at all secure. Perhaps he felt remorse for having brought so many evils on the empire; perhaps he had a fit of religious fervour and contempt for worldly things, but at any rate he donned the monkish garb and retired into the convent of Mangana (1355). He only came out to join his prayers to the threats of Joannes V in order to make Matthias lay aside the purple (1357).

By the abdication to which he had forced his son, the legitimate order of succession resumed its course in the house of Palæologus. Unhappily, the Greek Empire of the fourteenth century was not strong enough to stand the shocks of civil war. Irreparable losses in men, money, and territory were inflicted on her. Genoa and Venice were driving their talons deeper and deeper into her enfeebled body. The Greek Morea, and even Thessalonica, had grown used to doing as they would. Finally, the different parties had shown the Ottomans methods which they were not likely to forget.[1]

## THE CRUSADE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Latin Europe alone could have saved the Greek Empire, but in the fourteenth century she was worn out by wars with nation after nation, by the antagonism between the Roman pope and the Avignon pope, and even between council and council. When a sovereign pontiff appeared authorised to speak in the name of Europe, he imposed, as the first condition to an uncertain union, the recognition of his supremacy by the Eastern church.

It would take too long to recall all the crusading projects which were raised in the papal court of Avignon, and in that of the French kings from Philippe le Bel to Philippe VI of Valois. Under Benedict XII, a fleet was placed under the orders of the legate Henry, patriarch *in partibus* of Constantinople. Smyrna was taken from the Ionian emir, Omur Beg (1343). Fifty-two pirate ships were destroyed by the Christian fleet in sight of Athos (1344).

In 1366 Amadeus VI of Savoy, uncle of Joannes V, appeared in Byzantine waters. He took Gallipoli and Sozopolis from the Turks, repulsed an invasion of the Bulgarians, took from them Mesembria and Varna, and dictated a peace. In 1390, Louis II of Clermont, duke of Bourbon, landed at Tunis, Africa (Mehadia), but failed in the assault.

Thus in the West the crusading spirit was not yet extinct. Many of these crusades inspired little love for the Grecian Empire. Among the numerous projects presented to the popes and western sovereigns, there was one urging that the conquest of Byzantium was an indispensable preliminary to delivering the Holy Land.

[1 The fate of the empire was sealed when Murad took Hadrianopolis in 1361, following this the next year with the capture of Philippopolis and Serres.]

Joannes V Palæologus hoped, although this formidable Western sword was in so many hands, to turn it against the enemies of the empire. So pressing was the danger, that the head of the orthodox church had to consent to go and kneel at Rome before Pope Urban V (1369). Unfortunately the resources of the pope had been exhausted by the last enterprise. At Venice Joannes V had to borrow, at high interest, enough money to continue his journey. After a fruitless tour in the south of France, as Joannes V was passing through Venice, quite unable to repay the loan, he was imprisoned at the request of his creditors. Thus the sacred person of the heir of Constantine the Great was kept in pledge by Venetian usurers.

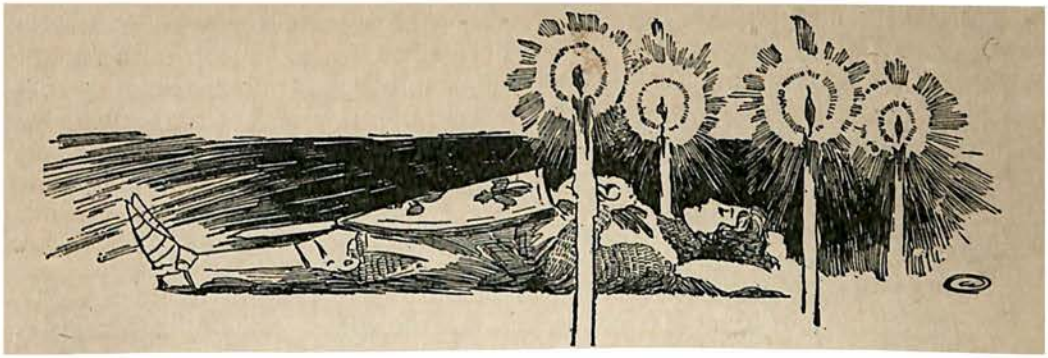
## THE EMPIRE TRIBUTARY TO THE TURKS

Joannes V had two sons, between whom he had divided his dominions beforehand. The elder, Andronicus, had been associated with the emperor; the second, Manuel, was governor of Thessaly. The emperor first addressed himself to the elder, begging him to collect funds for his ransom. Andronicus coldly replied that the treasury was empty. In truth, he was in no hurry to hasten the return of his father and colleague. Manuel had more pity. He mortgaged his lands and sent the money.

When Joannes returned to Constantinople he rewarded the two sons according to their deserts. Andronicus he disgraced, and associated Manuel with him in the empire. Abandoned by all his supporters, he consented to pay tribute to Murad I in 1381. Then, under the weight of crushing necessities, he had to sustain a further humiliation. Besides the tribute, he promised Murad to furnish a military contingent, and to give him one of his sons as hostage.

The Greek Empire now found itself in exactly the same position with regard to the Turks as the Russian princes were in relation to the khans of the Golden Horde. Like the princes of Moscow, Tver, and Ryazan, the basileus only existed by submitting to humiliations; like them, he had to cringe to the horde. His situation was worse than theirs; the khan only asked from the Russian *kniazes* tribute, obedience, and a military contingent. What more could he find to tempt his avarice in poverty-stricken Russia? The relations of the sultan and the basileus were not the same. The one could not pardon the other for perpetuating his memory in a city that was to be the capital of the new empire. The exactions were therefore more severe, the humiliations more cruelly calculated, the desire for spoliation was inextinguishable. Joannes V ended his miserable life in 1391, and his son Manuel succeeded him.

Of all the Palæologi, Manuel was the most cultivated and the most generous. He only felt the more shame at the degradation of the times. Perhaps he may best be compared with the Russian prince, Alexander Nevski.[e]



# CHAPTER XI

## MANUEL II TO THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

[1391–1453 A.D.]

### MANUEL II (1391–1399 A.D.)

THE emperor Manuel was at Brusa[1] when he heard of his father's death. He was generally esteemed, being neither destitute of talent nor personal courage, while his disposition was mild and conciliatory. Before Bajazet was informed of the death of Joannes V the new emperor had made his escape, and reached Constantinople in safety; but the sultan treated him as a rebellious vassal in consequence of his secret departure. Joannes Palæologus, the son of Andronicus, who had succeeded his father in the appanage of Selymbria, was encouraged to claim the empire in virtue of the treaty of 1381, by which the succession had been secured to his father and himself. A body of Turkish troops was instructed to ravage the Greek territory up to the very walls of Constantinople; but other matters calling for Bajazet's care, he accepted the submission of Manuel, and the Greek emperor again appeared as a vassal at the Sublime Porte.

The ambition of Bajazet was unbounded, and his love of war was inflamed by an inordinate confidence in his own military talents, and in the power of the Ottoman army. He despised the Christians, and considered it his first duty to reduce them to the condition of subjects, if not of slaves. The position of Manuel was therefore as dangerous as it was degrading; for although the spectacle of a Roman emperor standing as a suppliant before his throne soothed the pride of Bajazet, it was apparent that his vanity would readily yield to his ambition, if an opportunity presented of gaining Constantinople.

For several years Bajazet was employed consolidating his dominions both in Europe and Asia, and he was compelled to watch the movements of the western powers, which threatened him with a new crusade. At last, when Sigismund, king of Hungary, was about to invade the Ottoman dominions, the sultan convoked an assembly of the Christian princes who were then his vassals, in order to prevent their combining to assist the invaders. Manuel, the Greek emperor, Joannes, despot of Selymbria, Theodore, despot of the Peloponnesus, Stephen, king of Servia, Constantine Dragazes, the son of Tzarco, prince of the valley of the Vardar, and several Greek, Servian, Bulgarian,

[1 The name given to ancient Prusa after it fell into the hands of the Turks.]

and Albanian chiefs of less importance, who were already independent, appeared in the Ottoman camp at Serres. Circumstances induced the emperor Manuel and the despot Theodore to believe that their correspondence with the pope was known to the sultan, and that their lives were in danger. They both fled, and gained their own states in safety. Joannes of Selymbria remained to profit by the flight of his uncles; but Bajazet could only attend to the Hungarian war. His brilliant victory at Nicopolis in 1396 taught all Europe that the discipline of the janizaries was more than a match for the valour of the chivalry of France, and left him at liberty to punish the Greek princes for their desertion. He immediately turned his arms against the despot Theodore, and marched in person into Thessaly. The bishop of Phocis was the first traitor who joined the Mussulmans, and urged them to conquer Greece. The Wallachians of Thessaly and the widow of the count of Galona submitted to the terms imposed on them; and the sultan, seeing that no resistance would be offered to his troops by the Greeks in the Peloponnesus, turned back to Thrace. His generals, Yakub and Evrenus, took Corinth and Argos; while Theodore shut himself up within the walls of Misithra, and contemplated the ruin of his subjects without making an effort to save them. The Ottoman army, after ravaging great part of the peninsula, retired, carrying away immense booty and thirty thousand prisoners, whom they sold as slaves.

As Bajazet was not master of a sufficient naval force to attempt blockading Constantinople, he resolved to undermine the power of Manuel in such a way as would be least likely to awaken the jealousy of the commercial republics of Italy. He fanned the flames of family discord, which shed their lurid light on the records of the house of Palæologus by acknowledging Joannes, despot of Selymbria, as the lawful emperor of Constantinople and supplying him with a Turkish army to blockade Manuel by land.

The emperor Manuel, as soon as he saw that war with Bajazet was inevitable, had sent an ambassador to solicit assistance from Charles VI king of France. The marshal de Boucicault, who had already served with distinction in the East, and had been taken prisoner by Bajazet at Nicopolis, was appointed to command the forces which Charles VI sent to assist the Greek emperor. Boucicault sailed from Aigues-Mortes, and after some delay effected his junction with a fleet composed of eight Genoese, eight Venetian, two Rhodian galleys, and one of Mytilene, and proceeded to Constantinople, where he arrived in 1398. The arrival of Boucicault and his little army, which consisted of six hundred men-at-arms, without horses, six hundred infantry soldiers, and one thousand archers and cross-bowmen, revived the courage of the Greeks. The Genoese and Venetians were well acquainted with the Ottoman coast, and all under the direction of Constantinople carried on a succession of plundering incursions along the Asiatic coast, from the gulfs of Nicomedia and Mudania to the shores of the Black Sea. It was evident that this system of warfare could not long uphold the empire, and Boucicault, finding the Greeks incapable of making any exertions in their own defence, advised Manuel to seek assistance from the western nations. This advice would have in all probability arrived too late, had not the Ottoman power at this moment been threatened by the great Tatar conqueror, Timur. The sultan was therefore as much inclined to conclude a temporary peace as the emperor. The pretensions of Joannes of Selymbria were the only obstacle, and Manuel overcame this difficulty by a generous resolution. He opened communications with his nephew, whom he easily convinced that, if he entered Constantinople with Turkish troops, his reign would prove

of short duration. He then offered to receive Joannes as his colleague, and invest him with the government, while he himself visited western Europe. The marshal Boucicault guaranteed these arrangements, and a French force remained in the capital to protect the interests of Manuel during his absence. On the 4th of December, 1399, Joannes entered Constantinople, and was proclaimed emperor, and on the 10th, Manuel quitted his capital with Boucicault to present himself as a suppliant at the European courts.

Manuel II gained very little by his mendicant pilgrimage to Italy, France, and England. Some valuable presents were bestowed upon him by Visconti, the magnificent duke of Milan, and Charles VI of France granted him a pension of thirty thousand crowns; but he was compelled to return to Constantinople at the end of two years, with a little money and a few volunteers collected from people poorer and not more numerous than the Greeks. He learned on his way home that his enemy Bajazet had been defeated by Timur at Angora, and that the Ottoman Empire was utterly ruined. On reaching Constantinople he deprived his nephew Joannes, who had ruled during his absence, of the imperial title, and banished him to Lemnos. Joannes had already placed the Greek Empire in a state of vassalage to the Tatar conqueror; Manuel ratified the treaty, and paid to Timur the tribute which he had formerly paid to Bajazet. Rarely has the world seen a more total defeat than that sustained by the Ottoman army. Bajazet died a captive in the hands of Timur.

Rarely has so great a victory produced so little effect on the fate of the vanquished. For a moment, indeed, the Ottoman power was humbled, and an opening formed for the revival of the Greek Empire; but no energy remained in the political organisation of the Hellenic race beyond the confined sphere of local and individual interests; while the institutions of Orkhan, surviving the defeats and civil wars of the Ottomans, soon restored power to their central government, and rendered the sultan again the arbiter of the fate of Greece.

The civil wars among the sons of Bajazet had no small influence in prolonging the existence of the Greek Empire. The Ottoman historians reckon an interregnum of ten years after the battle of Angora, during which four of the sons of Bajazet contended for the sovereignty. Suleiman, Isa, and Mousa successively perished, and the youngest of the family, Muhammed I, at last reunited all his father's dominions, and was regarded as his legitimate successor and the fifth sultan of the Ottomans, including Osman, the founder of the dynasty.

After the battle of Angora, Suleiman sought safety in Constantinople, where he concluded a treaty with the emperor Manuel in the year 1403, by which he yielded up Thessalonica, the valley of the Strymon, Thessaly, and the coast of the Black Sea, as far as Varna, to the Greeks. Joannes of Selymbria was recalled from Lemnos, and established at Thessalonica with the title of emperor; but the control of the government was vested by Manuel in the hands of Demetrius Leontaris, a Byzantine noble. In return for the cession of these provinces, the emperor furnished Suleiman with money to collect an army and to establish his authority over the remainder of the Ottoman dominions in Europe.

But the debauchery of Suleiman at last induced the janizaries to join Mousa, and Suleiman was slain in attempting to escape to Constantinople, 1410 A.D. The close alliance which had existed between Suleiman and Manuel induced Mousa to turn his arms against the Greek Empire. He reconquered all the towns in Macedonia and Thessaly which his brother had

ceded to Manuel, with the exception of Thessalonica and Zeitounion. Mousa then laid siege to Constantinople; but his operations were paralysed by the destruction of a naval armament he had fitted out. The emperor had strengthened the imperial fleet, the command of which he had entrusted to his natural brother, named also Manuel, a man of courage and military talents. The admiral gained a complete victory over the Ottoman fleet; but his brilliant success excited the jealousy of his imperial brother. On returning to receive the thanks of his country, he was thrown into prison on an accusation of treason, and remained a prisoner during the life of his brother. The siege of Constantinople was merely a succession of skirmishes under its walls, in which several Greek nobles were slain; and the attention of Mousa was soon exclusively occupied by the attacks of his brother Muhammed.

A FOURTEENTH CENTURY KNIGHT

Mousa rendered his government as unpopular by his severity as Suleiman by his debauchery, and many of the Ottoman officers in Europe invited Muhammed to seize the throne. The emperor Manuel agreed to furnish transports to convey the Asiatic troops over the Bosporus; but he refused to admit them into Constantinople, though he allowed them to form their camp under its walls. The first operations of Muhammed were unsuccessful: but at last he forced Mousa to retire to Hadrianopolis, who, in the end, was deserted by all his followers and slain, 1413 A.D. Little more than ten years had elapsed from the day that Muhammed, then a mere youth, fled from the field of Angora with only one faithful companion, until he reunited under his sway nearly all the extensive dominions which had been ruled by his father. Timur had not perceived the fact that, the tribute of Christian children being the keystone on which the whole fabric of the Ottoman power rested, its resources were really much greater in Europe than in Asia.

The Greek Empire enjoyed an uninterrupted peace during the reign of Muhammed I, which lasted until the year 1421; and Manuel devoted his attention during this period to restoring some order in the public administration, and to re-establishing the sway of the central authority in the distant provinces of the empire. After completing his reforms in the civil, financial, military, and ecclesiastical departments of Constantinople, he found it necessary to visit the provinces in person, in order to reduce the local power of the Greek archons within reasonable bounds. He quitted Constantinople in the month of July, 1413, and commenced his operations by reducing the island of Thasos, the citadel of which resisted his little army for two months. The emperor then visited Thessalonica, where it

appears that he remained more than a year. His nephew Joannes, who was governor of the city, assumed the monastic habit; but whether he was compelled by the emperor to adopt this step, in order to allow the new reforms to be carried into execution, is uncertain. The despot Andronicus, the emperor's second son, was appointed governor of Thessalonica. After his father's death he sold the city to the Venetians for the sum of fifty thousand sequins.

In March, 1415, Manuel visited the Peloponnesus. The Roman Empire of the East had shrunk to such pitiful dimensions that the Byzantine province, which comprised only about three-quarters of that peninsula, was now its most extensive province. The first care of the emperor was to strengthen the means of defending this territory by fortifying the Isthmus of Corinth. He then directed his attention to reforming the abuses which the feudal tyranny of the Franks and the unprincipled fiscal extortions of the Greek archons had introduced into the administration. These abuses were rapidly exterminating the Greek agricultural population, and making way for the immigration of a ruder class of Albanian labourers.

When we compare the reforms of Manuel with the legislation of Orkhan, we are astonished at the great intellectual superiority displayed by the Ottomans at this period. The Greek emperor adopted only a few temporary devices to arrest the progress of social putrefaction in a diseased society. His own talents and the energies of his people were incompetent to make any bold efforts for extirpating the sources of the evil, and for infusing a spirit of honesty and patriotism into Greek society. Yet the fact that Greek society as well as the imperial government was rapidly decaying was generally acknowledged. The despot Theodore, Manuel's brother, who died about the year 1407, had felt the task of undertaking the regeneration of Greece so hopeless, and had found the difficulty of governing the Peloponnesians so great, that he attempted to sell his province to the knights of Rhodes, after he had introduced numerous colonies of Albanians to fill up the void caused by the decrease of the native population.

From a satirist of the time, we learn that while the emperor Manuel was occupied in diminishing the power and checking the abuses of the archons of the Peloponnesus and of the Constantinopolitan officials, many of the courtiers in his household made a traffic of creating new corruptions in the administration by selling imperial decrees and golden bulls. The character of the native Greeks he declares to be equally bad. He says: "They are formed of three parts: their tongue speaks one thing, their mind meditates another, and their actions accord with neither." There can be no good administration among an utterly demoralised people. When the emperor returned to Constantinople, he carried with him some of the most turbulent and intriguing of the Peloponnesian chiefs, who had, previous to his arrival, contrived to appropriate the greater part of the taxes levied on the people to their own use. Indeed the most important result of Manuel's visit was the introduction of such a degree of order in the provincial administration, that a fixed sum could be regularly remitted to the imperial treasury at Constantinople. His son Theodore remained as his viceroy at Misithra.

The death of Sultan Muhammed I in 1421 involved the empire in a contest with his son, Murad II. The self-conceit of the Greeks persuaded them that they could guide the progress of the Ottomans by their superiority in diplomacy. No experience could teach them that rhetoric and scholastic learning are feeble arms against military discipline and national courage. A pretender to the Ottoman throne resided at Constantinople, named

Mustapha, who asserted that he was a son of Bajazet. He was now acknowledged as lawful sultan, and Manuel concluded with him a treaty, by which Mustapha promised to restore Gallipoli, the Chalcidice of Macedonia, and the maritime cities on the Black Sea, while the emperor engaged to furnish money and military stores. He was abandoned by his followers, taken prisoner by Murad II, and hanged, in order to convince the world that he was an impostor.

Murad resolved to punish Manuel for his intrigues. The emperor was now weakened by age, and the direction of public affairs was in a great measure entrusted to his son Joannes, who endeavoured to appease the sultan with abject apologies. Murad gave the imperial ambassadors no answer until his preparations were completed. He then marched forward and formed the siege of Constantinople, establishing his own headquarters at the church of the Fountain, and commencing his lines of circumvallation in the month of June, 1422. His lines extended from the Golden Gate to the Wooden Gate; two movable towers were built to assist the storming of the wall, and cannon were employed by the Ottomans for the first time. This early artillery, however, was so ill-constructed and ill-served that it produced little effect. A thousand of the bravest janizaries fell before the walls; while the Greeks, fighting under cover of their battlements, lost only 130 killed and wounded. Murad II did not renew his attack on Constantinople, and the last act of Manuel's reign was to sign a treaty of peace, by which Murad left the empire in possession of a few cities in Thrace, of Thessalonica, and a few forts near the mouths of the Strymon, Mount Athos, Zeitounion, and some places in Thessaly. Manuel also engaged to pay the sultan an annual tribute of three hundred thousand aspers.

Manuel adopted the monastic habit two years before his death, and took the name of Matthew, but he continued to give his advice on public affairs. He died in July, 1425, at the age of seventy-seven, after a reign of thirty-four years.

### REIGN OF JOANNES VII (1423–1448 A.D.)

Joannes VII found the Eastern Roman Empire reduced to the city of Constantinople, a few neighbouring towns, Thessalonica, and a part of the Peloponnesus. His reign of twenty-three years passed in almost uninterrupted peace; yet this long period of tranquillity was productive of no improvement. As far as the revenues both of the government and of the nation were concerned, the emperor and the people alike consumed, before the expiration of each year, all that the year had produced.

The diminution of the Greek population contrasted strangely with the rapid increase of the Ottomans, while their decline in wealth and industry offered a still more unfavourable point of comparison with the Genoese colony of Galata. The trade of the Greeks had passed into the hands of the Italians; the power of the Byzantine emperors was transferred to the Ottoman sultans. The loss of personal dignity and courage followed the loss of national honour and power. Plague and pestilence, as often happens, came as attendants on neglected police, bad government, and social disorder. In the year 1431 a contagious disease of fearful mortality decimated the population of Constantinople; and it was the ninth return of pestilence since the great plague of 1347. Nations, however, are rarely sensible of their own degradation, and at this time the Greeks looked on the Latins with contempt as well as hatred; they despised the western Europeans as heretics, and the

Turks as barbarians. Court processions, religious ceremonies, and national vanity amused and consoled them as they hastened along the path of degradation and ruin.

All the fortified posts had been destroyed by Murad II when he besieged Constantinople, and the country, as far as Selymbria, was inhabited only by a few Greeks engaged in agriculture, who dwelt in open villages. The Greek empire ended at Selymbria. The frontier territory of the Ottomans was a similar scene of devastation, the land being tilled by a few Christian peasants for their Turkish masters.

## BRIEF UNION OF THE GREEK AND ROMAN CHURCHES

The conquest of Thessalonica by Sultan Murad in 1430, the quarrels of the despots Theodore, Constantine, and Thomas in the Peloponnesus, and the insolence of the Genoese of Galata, who attacked Constantinople on account of some disputes relating to the Black Sea trade, warned the emperor Joannes VII that, unless he could secure some efficient military aid from strangers, the Ottoman power would soon overwhelm the Greek Empire. The pope was the only sovereign who possessed sufficient power and influence to obtain effectual aid for the Eastern Empire: but there was no probability that he would exert that influence, unless the emperor Joannes consented to the union of the Greek and Latin churches, and recognised the papal supremacy. In this critical conjuncture the statesmen and ecclesiastics of rank at Constantinople decided that the political exigencies of their situation authorised their truckling even with the doctrines of their church.

In the year 1438 the emperor Joannes and the Greek patriarch made their appearance at the council of Ferrara. In the following year the council was transferred to Florence, where, after long discussions, the Greek emperor and all the members of the clergy who had attended the council, with the exception of the bishop of Ephesus, adopted the doctrines of the Roman church concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost, the addition to the Nicene Creed, the nature of purgatory, the condition of the soul after its separation from the body until the day of judgment, the use of unleavened bread in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the papal supremacy. The union of the two churches was solemnly ratified in the magnificent cathedral of Florence on the 6th of July, 1439, when the Greeks abjured their ancient faith in a vaster edifice and under a loftier dome than that of their own much-vaunted temple of St. Sophia.

The emperor Joannes derived none of the advantages he had expected from the simulated union of the churches. Pope Eugenius, it is true, supplied him liberally with money, but his holiness forgot his promise to send a fleet to defend Constantinople.

On his return Joannes found his subjects indignant at the manner in which the honour and doctrines of the Greek church had been sacrificed in an unsuccessful diplomatic speculation. The bishops who had obsequiously signed the articles of union at Florence, now sought popularity by deserting the emperor, and making a parade of their repentance, lamenting their wickedness in falling off for a time from the pure doctrine of the orthodox church. The only permanent result of this abortive attempt at Christian union was to increase the bigotry of the orthodox, and to furnish the Latins with just grounds for condemning the perfidious dealings and bad faith of the Greeks. In both ways it assisted the progress of the Ottoman power.

The emperor Joannes, seeing public affairs in this hopeless state, thought only of keeping on good terms with the sultan. His brother Demetrius, however, who had accompanied him to Florence, shared his apostasy, and partaken of the papal bounty, now basely attempted to take advantage of the popular dissatisfaction with the union. He claimed the throne as being the first child of Manuel who was a Porphyrogenitus, but he trusted to gain his ends by the aid of Turkish troops rather than by the merits of his title or the preference of the Greeks. Collecting a large force composed of the Turkish nomads, who were ready to join any standard that offered them an opportunity of plundering and enslaving the Christians, Demetrius marched to besiege his brother in Constantinople. Sultan Murad took no direct part in the contest, but he allowed Demetrius to enrol Turkish troops without opposition, and viewed with satisfaction a rebellion which tended to weaken the empire. When called upon to choose between the two brothers, the Greek people acknowledged the superiority of the reigning emperor. Demetrius, after plundering the suburbs of Constantinople, saw his army melt away, and was happy to find that his brother's moderation and love of peace was so great that he was allowed to retain his principality at Mesembria with the title of despot.

The deeds of Joannes (Janos) Hunyady might have awakened the Greeks from their lethargy, had any warlike spirit survived in the nation. The victory of the Hungarian army at the pass of Isladi, and a war with the sultan of Karamania, threatened the Ottoman Empire with serious danger; but the victory of Varna re-established the glory of the sultan's arms. Neither the successes of the Hungarians nor the presence of a papal force in the Hellespont, which at last made its appearance under the command of Cardinal Gondolmieri, could induce Emperor Joannes to unite his cause with that of the western powers. He had obtained too many proofs of the instability and imprudence of their counsels. The moment he heard of the great victory of Sultan Murad at Varna, he sent an embassy to congratulate his suzerain, and solicit a renewal of their alliance, which the sultan immediately granted. Joannes even contrived to avoid taking part in the war carried on against the sultan by his brother Constantine in Greece, and succeeded in preserving uninterrupted peace until his death in 1448. During his inglorious reign of twenty-three years he never forgot that he was a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. He proved precisely the temporising manager of the state that circumstances required; and his pliancy averted, during his lifetime, the calamities which were ready to overwhelm the Greek Empire.

## REIGN OF CONSTANTINE XIII (1448–1453 A.D.)

Constantine XIII, the last of the Greek emperors, was residing in his despotat at Sparta when his brother Joannes VII died. As he had been recently engaged in hostilities with the sultan, it was doubtful whether Murad would acknowledge him as emperor, and Demetrius availed himself of these doubts to make another attempt to occupy the throne. The deficiency of truth, honour, and patriotism among the Greek aristocracy during the last century of the Eastern Empire is almost without a parallel in history; but Demetrius was too well known and too generally despised to find a large party even in that worthless aristocracy disposed to espouse his cause, while Constantine, on the other hand, was known to possess both candour and energy, and was respected by all except the most bigoted among the orthodox Greeks.

[1451 A.D.]

Sultan Murad II died in February, 1451, after a prosperous reign of thirty years, and was succeeded by his son Muhammed II, who was only twenty-one years old. Muhammed II was a man of great ambition and great talents; he united with extraordinary activity and courage a degree of judgment rare in his high station, and still rarer at his early age.

The conquest of Constantinople was the first object of his ambition. It was by nature the capital of his dominions, and as long as it remained in the hands of the Greeks the Ottoman Empire lay open to the invasions of the western Christians. Having concluded a truce for three years with John Hunyady, the young sultan crossed over into Asia to suppress the hostile proceedings of Ibrahim, the sultan of Karamania.

MUHAMMED II
(From a medallion in the Royal Coin Cabinet, Berlin)

Constantine, who appears to have formed a very erroneous idea of the talents and character of Muhammed, took this opportunity of insulting him in the most sensitive manner by sending an embassy to demand an augmentation of the pension of three hundred thousand aspers, which the Ottoman court had accorded to the Greek for the maintenance of Orkhan, the grandson of Suleiman. The ambassadors were instructed to insinuate that, if the demand were not granted, Orkhan might be allowed to lay claim to the Ottoman throne.

Such an insult was not likely to be ever forgotten by a haughty and ambitious prince. The wary young sultan, however, dismissed the ambassadors with courtesy. But as soon as his Asiatic campaign was finished, he ordered the imperial agents to be expelled from the territory in the valley of the Strymon which had been assigned for the maintenance of Orkhan, and stopped all further payments. Shortly after, without informing Constantine of his intention, he constructed a fortress on the Greek territory at the narrowest part of the Bosporus, opposite a fort which had been constructed by Bajazet I on the Asiatic shore. The distance between the two forts is about three-quarters of a mile, and a rapid current flows between. The sultan had made every preparation for completing the work with extraordinary celerity. An ample supply of materials had been collected before his object was known, and as soon as the plan of the fortress was marked out, a thousand masons and two thousand labourers worked incessantly to complete the walls.

Constantine had good reason to consider the construction of this fortress on his territory, within five miles of his capital, and commanding its approach from the Black Sea, as an infraction of the treaty between the two empires, but he was too weak to resent this signal revenge for his own recent threats. He complained of the hostile invasion of the Greek territory, but Muhammed treated his reclamations with contempt, observing that

the ground on which the fortress was built, having been purchased and paid for, was Turkish property, and the emperor of Constantinople, being a vassal of the Porte, had no right to dispute the will of the sultan.

The first open resistance was offered by some Greeks, who endeavoured to prevent Muhammed's engineers from carrying off the marble columns from a church. These pious Christians were cut to pieces by the Ottoman troops. As the work advanced the sultan's aggressions increased. His soldiers were allowed to plunder; quarrels ensued in which blood was shed, and then the Turks attacked the Greeks who were getting in the harvest, and slew the reapers. Constantine in alarm closed the gates of Constantinople, cut off all communications between the Greeks and the Ottomans, and sent another embassy to the sultan to ask redress. Muhammed replied by a formal declaration of war.

### WAR WITH MUHAMMED

Both parties now began to prepare for the mortal contest. The siege of Constantinople was to be the great event of the coming year. The sultan, in order to prevent the emperor's brothers in the Peloponnesus from sending any succours to the capital, ordered Tourakhan, the pasha of Thessaly, to invade the peninsula. He himself took up his residence at Hadrianopolis, to collect warlike stores and siege artillery. Constantine, on his part, made every preparation in his power for vigorous defence. He formed large magazines of provisions, collected military stores, and enrolled all the soldiers he could muster among the Greek population of Constantinople. But the inhabitants of that city were either unable or unwilling to furnish recruits in proportion to their numbers. Bred up in peaceful occupation, they probably possessed neither the activity nor the habitual exercise which was required to move with ease under the weighty armour then in use.

So few were found disposed to fight for their country, that not more than six thousand Greek troops appeared under arms during the whole siege. The numerical weakness of the Greek army rendered it incapable of defending so large a city as Constantinople, even with all the advantage to be derived from strong fortifications. The emperor was, therefore, anxious to obtain the assistance of the warlike citizens of the Italian republics, where good officers and experienced troops were then numerous. As he had no money to engage mercenaries, he could only hope to succeed by papal influence. An embassy was sent to Pope Nicholas V, begging immediate aid, and declaring the emperor's readiness to complete the union of the churches in any way the pope should direct. Nicholas despatched Cardinal Isidore, the metropolitan of Kieff, who had joined the Latin church, as his legate. Isidore had represented the Russian church at the council of Florence; but on his return to Russia he was imprisoned as an apostate, and with difficulty escaped to Italy. He was by birth a Greek; and being a man of learning and conciliatory manners, it was expected that he would be favourably received at Constantinople.

The cardinal arrived at Constantinople in November, 1452. He was accompanied by a small body of chosen troops, and brought some pecuniary aid, which he employed in repairing the most dilapidated part of the fortifications. Both the emperor and the cardinal deceived themselves in supposing that the dangers to which the Greek nation and the Christian church were exposed would induce the orthodox to yield something of their ecclesi-

astical forms and phrases. It was evident that foreign aid could alone save Constantinople, and it was absurd to imagine that the Latins would fight for those that treated them as heretics, and who would not fight for themselves. The crisis, therefore, compelled the Greeks to choose between union with the church of Rome or submission to the Ottoman power. They had to decide whether the preservation of the Greek Empire was worth the ecclesiastical sacrifices they were called upon to make in order to preserve their national independence.

### CHURCH DISSENSIONS

In the meantime, the emperor Constantine celebrated his union with the papal church, in the cathedral of St. Sophia, on the 12th of December, 1452. The court and the great body of the dignified clergy ratified the act by their presence; but the monks and the people repudiated the connection. In their opinion, the church of St. Sophia was polluted by the ceremony, and from that day it was deserted by the orthodox. The historian Ducas declares that they looked upon it as a haunt of demons, and no better than a pagan shrine. The monks, the nuns, and the populace publicly proclaimed their detestation of the union; and their opposition was inflamed by the bigotry of an ambitious pedant, who, under the name of Georgius Scholarius, acted as a warm partisan of the union at the council of Florence, and under the ecclesiastical name of Gennadius is known in history as the subservient patriarch of Sultan Muhammed II. On returning from Italy, he made a great parade of his repentance for complying with the unionists at Florence. He shut himself up in the monastery of Pantocrator, where he assumed the monastic habit, and the name of Gennadius, under which he consummated the union between the Greek church and the Ottoman administration.

At the present crisis he stepped forward as the leader of the most bigoted party, and excited his followers to the most furious opposition to measures which he had once advocated as salutary to the church, and indispensable for the preservation of the state. The unionists were now accused of sacrificing true religion to the delusions of human policy, of insulting God to serve the pope, and of preferring the interests of their bodies to the care of their souls. In place of exhorting their countrymen to aid the emperor, who was straining every nerve to defend their country — in place of infusing into their minds the spirit of patriotism and religion, these teachers of the people were incessantly inveighing against the wickedness of the unionists and the apostasy of the emperor.

So completely did their bigotry extinguish every feeling of patriotism that the grand duke Notaras declared he would rather see Constantinople subjected to the turban of the sultan than to the tiara of the pope. His wish was gratified; but, in dying, he must have felt how fearfully he had erred in comparing the effects of papal arrogance with the cruelty of Mohammedan tyranny. The emperor Constantine, who felt the importance of the approaching contest, showed great prudence and moderation in his difficult position. The spirit of Christian charity calmed his temper, and his determination not to survive the empire gave a deliberate coolness to his military conduct. Though his Greek subjects often raised seditions, and reviled him in the streets, the emperor took no notice of their behaviour. To induce the orthodox to fight for their country, by having a leader of their own party, he left the grand duke Notaras in office; yet he well knew that this bigot

would never act cordially with the Latin auxiliaries, who were the best troops in the city; and the emperor had some reason to distrust the patriotism of Notaras, seeing that he hoarded his immense wealth, instead of expending a portion of it for his country.

### PREPARATIONS FOR DEFENCE

The fortifications were not found to be in a good state of repair. Two monks, who had been entrusted with a large sum for the purpose of repairing them, had executed their duty in an insufficient, and, it was generally said, in a fraudulent manner. The extreme dishonesty that prevailed among the Greek officials explains the selection of monks as treasurers for military objects; and it must lessen our surprise at finding men of their religious professions sharing in the general avarice, or tolerating the habitual peculation of others.

Cannon were beginning to be used in sieges, but stone balls were used in the larger pieces of artillery; and the larger the gun, the greater was the effect it was expected to produce. Even in Constantinople there were some artillery too large to be of much use, as the land wall had not been constructed to admit of their recoil, and the ramparts were so weak as to be shaken by their concussion. Constantine had also only a moderate supply of gunpowder. The machines of a past epoch in military science, but to the use of which the Greeks adhered with their conservative prejudices, were brought from the storehouses, and planted on the walls beside the modern artillery. Johann Grant, a German officer, who arrived with Justiniani, was the most experienced artilleryman and military engineer in the place.

A considerable number of Italians hastened to Constantinople as soon as they heard of its danger, eager to defend so important a depot of eastern commerce. The spirit of enterprise and the love of military renown had become as much a characteristic of the merchant nobles of the commercial republics as they had been, in a preceding age, distinctions of the barons in feudal monarchies. All the nations who then traded with Constantinople furnished contingents to defend its walls.

A short time before the siege commenced, John Justiniani arrived with two Genoese galleys and three hundred chosen troops, and the emperor valued his services so highly that he was appointed general of the guard. The resident bailo of the Venetians furnished three large galleasses and a body of troops for the defence of the port. The consul of the Catalans, with his countrymen and the Aragonese, undertook the defence of the great palace of Bukoleon and the port of Kontoskalion. The cardinal Isidore, with the papal troops, defended the Kynegesion, and the angle of the city at the head of the port down to St. Demetrius. The importance of the aid which was afforded by the Latins is proved by the fact that, of twelve military divisions into which Constantine divided the fortifications, the commands of only two were trusted to the exclusive direction of Greek officers. In the others, Greeks shared the command with foreigners, or else foreigners alone conducted the defence.

When all Constantine's preparations for defence were completed, he found himself obliged to man a line of wall on the land side of about five miles in length, every point of which was exposed to a direct attack. The remainder of the wall towards the port and the Propontis exceeded nine miles in extent, and his whole garrison hardly amounted to nine thousand men. His fleet

[1453 A.D.]

consisted of only twenty galleys and three Venetian galleasses, but the entry of the port was closed by a chain, the end of which, on the side of Galata, was secured in a strong fort of which the Greeks kept possession. During the winter the emperor sent out his fleet to ravage the coast of the Propontis as far as Cyzicus, and the spirit of the Greeks was roused by the booty they made in these expeditions.

Muhammed II spent the winter at Hadrianopolis, preparing everything necessary for commencing the siege with vigour. His whole mind was absorbed by the glory of conquering the Roman Empire, and gaining possession of Constantinople, which for more than 1150 years had been the capital of the East. While the fever of ambition inflamed his soul, his cooler judgment also warned him that the Ottoman power rested on a perilous basis as long as Constantinople, the true capital of his empire, remained in the hands of others. Muhammed could easily assemble a sufficient number of troops for his enterprise, but it required all his activity and power to collect the requisite supplies of provisions and stores for the immense military and naval force he had ordered to assemble, and to prepare the artillery and ammunition necessary to insure success. Early and late, in his court and in his cabinet, the young sultan could talk of nothing but the approaching siege. With the writing-reed and a scroll of paper in his hand, he was often seen tracing plans of the fortifications of Constantinople and marking out positions for his own batteries. Every question relating to the extent and locality of the various magazines to be constructed in order to maintain the troops was discussed in his presence; he himself distributed the troops in their respective divisions and regulated the order of their march; he issued the orders relating to the equipment of the fleet, and discussed the various methods proposed for breaching, mining, and scaling the walls. His enthusiasm was the impulse of a hero, but the immense superiority of his force would have secured him the victory with any ordinary degree of perseverance.

The Ottomans were already familiar with the use of cannon. Murad II had employed them when he besieged Constantinople in 1422; but Muhammed now resolved on forming a more powerful battering-train than had previously existed. Neither the Greeks nor the Turks possessed the art of casting large guns. Both were obliged to employ foreigners. An experienced artilleryman and founder, named Urban, by birth a Wallachian, carried into execution the sultan's wishes. He had passed some time in the Greek service; but even the moderate pay he was allowed by the emperor having fallen in arrear, he resigned his place and transferred his services to the sultan, who knew better how to value warlike knowledge. He now gave Muhammed proof of his skill by casting the largest cannon which had ever been fabricated. He had already placed one of extraordinary size in the new castle of the Bosporus, which carried a ball across the straits. The gun destined for the siege of Constantinople far exceeded in size this monster, and the diameter of its mouth must have been nearly two feet and a half. Other cannon of great size, whose balls of stone weighed 150 pounds, were also cast, as well as many guns of smaller calibre. All these, together with a number of ballists and other ancient engines still employed in sieges, were mounted on carriages in order to transport them to Constantinople. The conveyance of this formidable train of artillery, and of the immense quantity of ammunition required for its service, was by no means a trifling operation.[1]

[1] Leonard says the balls of the large gun were eleven of his spans in circumference.

### THE SIEGE BEGINS

The first division of the Ottoman army moved from Hadrianopolis in the month of February, 1453. In the meantime a numerous corps of pioneers worked constantly at the road, in order to prepare it for the passage of the long train of artillery and baggage wagons. Temporary bridges, capable of being taken to pieces, were erected by the engineers over every ravine and watercourse, and the materials for the siege advanced steadily, though slowly, to their destination. The extreme difficulty of moving the monster

MUHAMMED II
(From a medallion in the Royal Coin Cabinet, Berlin)

cannon with its immense balls retarded the sultan's progress, and it was the beginning of April before the whole battering-train reached Constantinople, though the distance from Hadrianopolis is barely a hundred miles. The division of the army under Karadja Pasha had already reduced Mesembria, Anchialus, Bizya, and the castle of St. Stephanus. Selymbria alone defended itself, and the fortifications were so strong that Muhammed ordered it to be closely blockaded, and left its fate to be determined by that of the capital.

On the 6th of April, Sultan Muhammed II encamped on the slope of the hill facing the quarter of Blachernæ, a little beyond the ground occupied by the crusaders in 1203, and immediately ordered the construction of lines, extending from the head of the port to the shore of the Propontis. These lines were formed of a mound of earth, and they served both to restrain the sorties of the besieged, and to cover the troops from the fire of the enemy's artillery and missiles. The batteries were then formed; the principal were erected against the gate Charsiasæ, in the quarter of Blachernæ, and against

the gate of St. Romanus, near the centre of the city wall. It was toward this last gate that the fire of the monster gun was directed and the chief attack was made.

The land-forces of the Turks probably amounted to about seventy thousand men of all arms and qualities; but the real strength of the army lay in the corps of janizaries, then the best infantry in Europe, and their number did not exceed twelve thousand.[1] At the same time, twenty thousand cavalry, mounted on the finest horses of the Turkoman breed, and hardened by long service, were ready to fight either on horseback or on foot under the eye of their young sultan. The fleet which had been collected along the Asiatic coast, from the ports of the Black Sea to those of the Ægean, brought additional supplies of men, provisions, and military stores. It consisted of 320 vessels of various sizes and forms. The greater part were only half-decked coasters, and even the largest were far inferior in size to the galleys and galleasses of the Greeks and Italians. The fortifications of Constantinople towards the sea afford great facilities for attack. Even though they were partly ruined by time, and weakened by careless reparations, they still offered a formidable resistance to the imperfect science of the engineers in Muhammed's army.[c]

Of the triangle which composes the figure of Constantinople, the two sides along the sea were made inaccessible to an enemy; the Propontis by nature, and the harbour by art. Between the two waters the basis of the triangle, the land side, was protected by a double wall, and a deep ditch of the depth of one hundred feet. Against this line of fortification, which Phrantzes, an eye-witness, prolongs to the measure of six miles, the Ottomans directed their principal attack; and the emperor, after distributing the service and command of the most perilous stations, undertook the defence of the external wall. In the first days of the siege, the Greek soldiers descended into the ditch or sallied into the field; but they soon discovered that, in the proportion of their numbers, one Christian was of more value than twenty Turks; and, after these bold preludes, they were prudently content to maintain their rampart with their missile weapons. Nor should this prudence be accused of pusillanimity. The nation was indeed pusillanimous and base; but the last Constantine deserves the name of a hero; his noble band of volunteers was inspired with Roman virtue; and the foreign auxiliaries supported the honour of the western chivalry.

Each day added to the science of the Christians; but their inadequate stock of gunpowder was wasted in the operations of each day. Their ordnance was not powerful, either in size or number; and if they possessed some heavy cannon, they feared to plant them on the walls, lest the aged structure should be shaken and overthrown by the explosion.

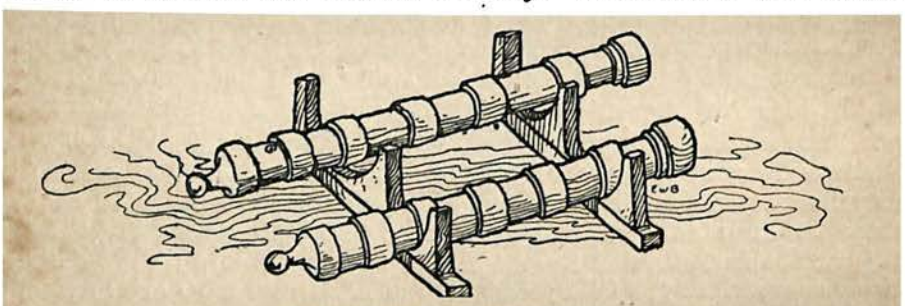
The great cannon of Muhammed has been separately noticed; an important and visible object in the history of the times; but that enormous engine was flanked by two fellows almost of equal magnitude; the long order of the Turkish artillery was pointed against the walls; fourteen batteries thundered at once on the most accessible places; and of one of these it is ambiguously expressed, that it was mounted with 130 guns, or that it discharged 130 bullets. Yet, in the power and activity of the sultan, we may discern the infancy of the

[1 This is Finlay's account, but Hertzberg's says: "The number of troops (beside the great camp following and a mass of fanatic imams, mullahs and dervishes) totalled at the lowest, and therefore the most trustworthy, estimate 165,000 men, of which, with the 15,000 janissaries, well over 80,000 were regular soldiers. The fleet, according to an apparently reliable account, numbered 145 sail, namely 12 great galleys, about 80 double-deckers, some 25 smaller coasters, and a number of brigs."]

new science. Under a master who counted the moments, the great cannon could be loaded and fired no more than seven times in one day. The heated metal unfortunately burst: several workmen were destroyed; and the skill of an artist was admired who bethought himself of preventing the danger and the accident, by pouring oil, after each explosion, into the mouth of the cannon.

The first random shots were productive of more sound than effect; and it was by the advice of a Christian, that the engineers were taught to level their aim against the two opposite sides of the salient angles of a bastion. However imperfect, the weight and repetition of the fire made some impression on the walls; and the Turks, pushing their approaches to the edge of the ditch, attempted to fill the enormous chasm, and to build a road to the assault. After a long and bloody conflict, the web that had been woven in the day was still unravelled in the night. The next resource of Muhammed was the practice of mines; but the soil was rocky; in every attempt, he was stopped and undermined by the Christian engineers; nor had the art been yet invented of replenishing those subterraneous passages with gunpowder, and blowing whole towers and cities into the air.

A circumstance that distinguishes the siege of Constantinople, is the reunion of the ancient and modern artillery. The cannon were intermin-



FIFTEENTH CENTURY CANNON
(After De Montfaucon)

gled with the mechanical engines for casting stones and darts; the bullet and the battering-ram were directed against the same walls; nor had the discovery of gunpowder superseded the use of the liquid and unextinguishable fire. A wooden turret of the largest size was advanced on rollers; the tower of St. Romanus was at length overturned; after a severe struggle, the Turks were repulsed from the breach, and interrupted by darkness. Of this pause of action, this interval of hope, each moment was improved by the activity of the emperor and Justiniani, who passed the night on the spot, and urged the labours which involved the safety of the church and city. At the dawn of day, the impatient sultan perceived, with astonishment and grief, that his wooden turret had been reduced to ashes; the ditch was cleared and restored; and the tower of St. Romanus was again strong and entire. He deplored the failure of his design; and uttered a profane exclamation, that the word of the thirty-seven thousand prophets should not have compelled him to believe that such a work, in so short a time, could have been accomplished by the infidels.

In the first apprehension of a siege, Constantine had negotiated, in the isles of the Archipelago, the Morea, and Sicily, the most indispensable supplies. Five great ships, equipped for merchandise and war, sailed from the harbour of Chios. One of these ships bore the imperial flag; the remaining four belonged to the Genoese; and they were laden with wheat and barley,

[1453 A.D.]
with wine, oil, and vegetables, and above all, with soldiers and mariners, for the service of the capital. The Turkish fleet at the entrance of the Bosporus, was stretched from shore to shore, in the form of a crescent, to intercept these bold auxiliaries. The reader who has present to his mind the geographical picture of Constantinople, will conceive and admire the greatness of the spectacle.

The five Christian ships continued to advance with joyful shouts, and a full press both of sails and oars, against a hostile fleet of three hundred vessels; and the rampart, the camp, the coasts of Europe and Asia, were lined with innumerable spectators, who anxiously awaited the event of this momentous succour. At the first view that event could not appear doubtful; the superiority of the Moslems was beyond all measure or account; and, in a calm, their numbers and valour must inevitably have prevailed. But their hasty and imperfect navy had been created, not by the genius of the people, but by the will of the sultan; in the height of their prosperity, the Turks have acknowledged that if God had given them the earth, he had left the sea to the infidels; and a series of defeats, a rapid progress of decay, has established the truth of their modest confession. In this conflict, the imperial vessel, which had been almost overpowered, was rescued by the Genoese; but the Turks, in a distant and closer attack, were twice repulsed with considerable loss.

Muhammed himself sat on horseback on the beach to encourage their valour by his voice and presence, by the promise of reward, and by fear more potent than the fear of the enemy. The passions of his soul, and even the gestures of his body, seemed to imitate the actions of the combatants; and, as if he had been the lord of nature, he spurred his horse with a fearless and impotent effort into the sea. His loud reproaches, and the clamours of the camp, urged the Ottomans to a third attack, more fatal and bloody than the two former; and we must repeat, though we cannot credit, the evidence of Phrantzes, who affirms from their own mouth that they lost above twelve thousand men in the slaughter of the day. The Christian squadron, triumphant and unhurt, steered along the Bosporus, and securely anchored within the chain of the harbour.

The reduction of the city appeared to be hopeless, unless a double attack could be made from the harbour as well as from the land; but the harbour was inaccessible; an impenetrable chain was now defended by eight large ships, more than twenty of a smaller size, with several galleys and sloops; and instead of forcing this barrier, the Turks might apprehend a naval sally, and a second encounter in the open sea.

In this perplexity, the genius of Muhammed conceived and executed a plan of a bold and marvellous cast, of transporting by land his lighter vessels and military stores from the Bosporus into the higher part of the harbour. The distance is about ten miles; the ground is uneven, and was overspread with thickets; and, as the road must be opened behind the suburb of Galata, their free passage or total destruction must depend on the option of the Genoese. But these selfish merchants were ambitious of the favour of being the last devoured; and the deficiency of art was supplied by the strength of obedient myriads. A level way was covered with a broad platform of strong and solid planks; and to render them more slippery and smooth, they were anointed with the fat of sheep and oxen. Fourscore light galleys and brigantines of fifty and thirty oars were disembarked on the Bosporus shore; arranged successively on rollers; and drawn forward by the power of men and pulleys. Two guides or pilots were stationed at the helm and the prow of each vessel;

the sails were unfurled to the winds; and the labour was cheered by song and acclamation. In the course of a single night, this Turkish fleet painfully climbed the hill, steered over the plain, and was launched from the declivity into the shallow waters of the harbour, far above the molestation of the deeper vessels of the Greeks. The real importance of this operation was magnified by the consternation and confidence which it inspired; but the notorious, unquestionable fact was displayed before the eyes, and is recorded by the pens, of the two nations. A similar stratagem had been repeatedly practised by the ancients.

As soon as Muhammed had occupied the upper harbour with a fleet and army, he constructed, in the narrowest part, a bridge or rather mole of fifty cubits in breadth, and one hundred in length; it was formed of casks and hogsheads, joined with rafters linked with iron and covered with a solid floor. On this floating battery he planted one of his largest cannon, while the fourscore galleys, with troops and scaling-ladders, approached the most accessible side, which had formerly been stormed by the Latin conquerors. His vigilance prevented the approach of the Greek ships; their foremost galliots were sunk or taken; forty youths, the bravest of Italy and Greece, were inhumanly massacred at his command; nor could the emperor's grief be assuaged by the just though cruel retaliation, of exposing from the walls the heads of 260 Mussulman captives.

After a siege of forty days, the fate of Constantinople could no longer be averted. The diminutive garrison was exhausted by a double attack; the fortifications which had stood for ages against hostile violence, were dismantled on all sides by the Ottoman cannon; many breaches were opened; and near the gate of St. Romanus, four towers had been levelled with the ground. For the payment of his feeble and mutinous troops, Constantine was compelled to despoil the churches, with the promise of a fourfold restitution; and his sacrilege offered a new reproach to the enemies of the union. A spirit of discord impaired the remnant of the Christian strength; the Genoese and Venetian auxiliaries asserted the pre-eminence of their respective service; and Justiniani and the grand duke, whose ambition was not extinguished by the common danger, accused each other of treachery and cowardice.

During the siege of Constantinople, the words of peace and capitulation had been sometimes pronounced; and several embassies had passed between the camp and the city. The Greek emperor was humbled by adversity; and would have yielded to any terms compatible with religion and royalty. The Turkish sultan was desirous of sparing the blood of his soldiers; still more desirous of securing for his own use the Byzantine treasures; and he accomplished a sacred duty in presenting to the *gabours* the choice of circumcision, of tribute, or of death. The avarice of Muhammed might have been satisfied with an annual sum of one hundred thousand ducats; but his ambition grasped the capital of the East; to the prince he offered a rich equivalent, to the people a free toleration, or a safe departure; but after some fruitless treaty, he declared his resolution of finding either a throne, or a grave, under the walls of Constantinople.

A sense of honour, and the fear of universal reproach, forbade Palæologus to resign the city into the hands of the Ottomans; and he determined to abide the last extremities of war. Several days were employed by the sultan in the preparations of the assault; and a respite was granted by his favourite science of astrology, which had fixed on the 29th of May as the fortunate and fatal hour. On the evening of the 27th he issued his final

[1453 A.D.]

orders. A crowd of dervishes visited the tents, to instil the desire of martyrdom, and the assurance of spending an immortal youth amidst the rivers and gardens of paradise and in the embraces of the black-eyed virgins. Yet Muhammed principally trusted to the efficacy of temporal and visible rewards. A double pay was promised to the victorious troops; "The city and the buildings," said Muhammed, "are mine; but I resign to your valour the captives and the spoil, the treasures of gold and beauty; be rich and be happy. Many are the provinces of my empire: the intrepid soldier who first ascends the walls of Constantinople, shall be rewarded with the government of the fairest and most wealthy; and my gratitude shall accumulate his honours and fortunes above the measure of his own hopes." Such various and potent motives diffused among the Turks a general ardour, regardless of life, and impatient for action; the camp re-echoed with the Moslem shouts of "God is God, there is but one God, and Mohammed is the apostle of God;" and the sea and land, from Galata to the Seven Towers, were illuminated by the blaze of their nocturnal fires.

Far different was the state of the Christians; who, with loud and impotent complaints, deplored the guilt, or the punishment, of their sins. The celestial image of the virgin had been exposed in solemn procession; but their divine patroness was deaf to their entreaties; they accused the obstinacy of the emperor for refusing a timely surrender; anticipated the horrors of their fate; and sighed for the repose and security of Turkish servitude. The noblest of the Greeks, and the bravest of the allies, were summoned to the palace, to prepare them, on the evening of the twenty-eighth, for the duties and dangers of the general assault. The last speech of Palæologus was the funeral oration of the Roman Empire: he promised, he conjured, and he vainly attempted to infuse the hope which was extinguished in his own mind. In this world all was comfortless and gloomy; and neither the Gospel nor the church have proposed any conspicuous recompense to the heroes who fall in the service of their country. But the example of their prince, and the confinement of a siege, had armed these warriors with the courage of despair; and the pathetic scene is described by the feelings of the historian Phrantzes,[f] who was himself present at this mournful assembly. They wept, they embraced; regardless of their families and fortunes, they devoted their lives; and each commander, departing to his station, maintained all night a vigilant and anxious watch on the rampart. The emperor, and some faithful companions, entered the dome of St. Sophia, which in a few hours was to be converted into a mosque, and devoutly received, with tears and prayers, the sacrament of the holy communion. He reposed some moments in the palace, which resounded with cries and lamentations; solicited the pardon of all whom he might have injured; and mounted on horseback to visit the guards, and explore the motions of the enemy. The distress and fall of the last Constantine are more glorious than the long prosperity of the Byzantine cæsars.

### THE FINAL ASSAULT

In the confusion of darkness, an assault may sometimes succeed; but in this great and general attack, the military judgment and astrological knowledge of Muhammed advised him to expect the morning, the memorable 29th of May, in the fourteen hundred and fifty-third year of the Christian era. The preceding night had been strenuously employed. Under pain of death, silence was enjoined; but the physical laws of motion and sound are

not obedient to discipline or fear; each individual might suppress his voice and measure his footsteps; but the march and labour of thousands must inevitably produce a strange confusion of dissonant clamours, which reached the ears of the watchmen of the towers. At daybreak, without the customary signal of the morning gun, the Turks assaulted the city by sea and land; and the similitude of a twined or twisted thread has been applied to the closeness and continuity of their line of attack.

The foremost ranks consisted of the refuse of the host, a voluntary crowd, who fought without order or command; of the feebleness of age or childhood, of peasants and vagrants, and of all who had joined the camp in the blind hope of plunder and martyrdom. The common impulse drove them onwards to the wall: the most audacious to climb were instantly precipitated; and not a dart, not a bullet, of the Christians was idly wasted on the accumulated throng. But their strength and ammunition were exhausted in this laborious defence; the ditch was filled with the bodies of the slain; they supported the footsteps of their companions; and of this devoted vanguard, the death was more serviceable than the life.

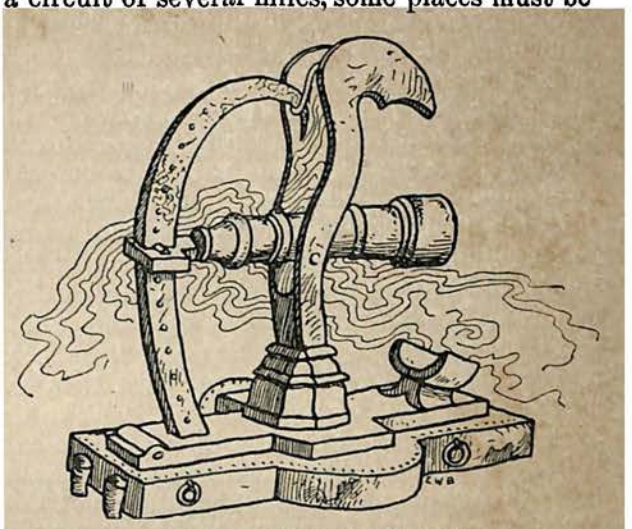
Under their respective pashas and sanjaks, the troops of Anatolia and Romania were successively led to the charge; their progress was various and doubtful; but, after a conflict of two hours, the Greeks still maintained and improved their advantage. In that fatal moment, the janizaries arose, fresh, vigorous, and invincible. The sultan himself on horseback, with an iron mace in his hand, was the spectator and judge of their valour; he was surrounded by ten thousand of his domestic troops, whom he reserved for the decisive occasion; and the tide of battle was directed and impelled by his voice and eye. His numerous ministers of justice were posted behind the line, to urge, to restrain, and to punish; and if danger was in the front, shame and inevitable death were in the rear of the fugitives. The cries of fear and of pain were drowned in the martial music of drums, trumpets, and attaballs; and experience has proved that the mechanical operation of sounds, by quickening the circulation of the blood and spirits, will act on the human machine more forcibly than the eloquence of reason and honour. From the lines, the galleys, and the bridge, the Ottoman artillery thundered on all sides; and the camp and city, the Greeks and the Turks, were involved in a cloud of smoke, which could only be dispelled by the final deliverance or destruction of the Roman Empire.

The immediate loss of Constantinople may be ascribed to the bullet, or arrow, which pierced the gauntlet of John Justiniani. The sight of his blood, and the exquisite pain, appalled the courage of the chief, whose arms and counsels were the firmest rampart of the city. As he withdrew from his station in quest of a surgeon, his flight was perceived and stopped by the indefatigable emperor: "Your wound," explained Palæologus, "is slight; the danger is pressing; your presence is necessary; and whither will you retire?" "I will retire," said the trembling Genoese, "by the same road which God has opened to the Turks;" and at these words he hastily passed through one of the breaches of the inner wall. By this pusillanimous act, he stained the honours of a military life; and the few days which he survived in Galata, or the isle of Chios, were embittered by his own and the public reproach.[1]

[1] Justiniani is defended by Finlaye on apparently good grounds. He demanded additional guns for the defence of the great breach; these were refused by the grand duke Notaras, who had the official control over the artillery, and Constantine was obliged to exert all his authority to prevent the two generals coming to blows. Justiniani's wound must have disabled him; he retired to his ship to have it dressed and it was found to be mortal. His dialogue with Constantine, Finlay says, "is evidently a rhetorical invention."

[1453 A.D.]

His example was imitated by the greatest part of the Latin auxiliaries; and the defence began to slacken when the attack was pressed with redoubled vigour. The number of the Ottomans was fifty, perhaps a hundred, times superior to that of the Christians; the double walls were reduced by the cannon to a heap of ruins; in a circuit of several miles, some places must be found more easy of access, or more feebly guarded; and if the besiegers could penetrate in a single point, the whole city was irrecoverably lost. The first who deserved the sultan's reward was Hassan the janizary, of gigantic stature and strength. With his scimitar in one hand, and his buckler in the other, he ascended the outward fortification; of the thirty janizaries who were emulous of his valour, eighteen perished in the bold adventure. Hassan and his twelve companions had reached the summit; the giant was precipitated from the rampart; he rose on one knee, and was again oppressed by a shower of darts and stones. But his success had proved that the achievement was possible; the walls and towers were instantly covered with a swarm of Turks; and the Greeks, now driven from the vantage ground, were overwhelmed by increasing multitudes.



FIFTEENTH CENTURY CANNON
(After De Montfaucon)

Amidst these multitudes, the emperor, who accomplished all the duties of a general and a soldier, was long seen, and finally lost. The nobles, who fought round his person sustained, till their last breath, the honourable names of Palæologus and Cantacuzenus; his mournful exclamation was heard, "Cannot there be found a Christian to cut off my head?" and his last fear was that of falling alive into the hands of the infidels. The prudent despair of Constantine cast away the purple; amidst the tumult he fell by an unknown hand, and his body was buried under a mountain of the slain.

After his death, resistance and order were no more; the Greeks fled towards the city; and many were pressed and stifled in the narrow pass of the gate of St. Romanus. The victorious Turks rushed through the breaches of the inner wall; and as they advanced into the streets they were soon joined by their brethren, who had forced the gate Phenar on the side of the harbour. In the first heat of the pursuit, about two thousand Christians were put to the sword; but avarice soon prevailed over cruelty; and the victors acknowledged that they should immediately have given quarter, if the valour of the emperor and his chosen bands had not prepared them for a similar opposition in every part of the capital.

It was thus, after a siege of fifty-three days, that Constantinople, which had defied the power of Chosroes, the chagan, and the caliphs, was irretrievably subdued by the arms of Muhammed II. Her empire only had been subverted by the Latins; her religion was trampled in the dust by the Moslem conquerors.

### THE SACK OF CONSTANTINOPLE

On the assurance of the public calamity, the houses and convents were instantly deserted; and the trembling inhabitants flocked together in the streets, like a herd of timid animals, as if accumulated weakness could be productive of strength, or in the vain hope, that, amid the crowd, each individual might be safe and invisible. From every part of the capital they flowed into the church of St. Sophia; in the space of an hour, the sanctuary, the choir, the nave, the upper and lower galleries, were filled with the multitudes of fathers and husbands, of women and children, of priests, monks, and religious virgins; the doors were barred on the inside, and they sought protection from the sacred dome, which they had so lately abhorred as a profane and polluted edifice. Their confidence was founded on the prophecy of an enthusiast or impostor, that one day the Turks would enter Constantinople, and pursue the Romans as far as the column of Constantine, in the square before St. Sophia; but that this would be the term of their calamities; that an angel would descend from heaven, with a sword in his hand, and would deliver the empire, with that celestial weapon, to a poor man seated at the foot of the column. "Take this sword," would he say, "and avenge the people of the Lord." At these animating words the Turks would instantly fly, and the victorious Romans would drive them from the West, and from all Anatolia, as far as the frontiers of Persia. It is on this occasion, that Ducas,[g] with some fancy and much truth, upbraids the discord and obstinacy of the Greeks. "Had that angel appeared," exclaims the historian, "had he offered to exterminate your foes if you would consent to the union of the church, even then, in that fatal moment, you would have rejected your safety, or have deceived your God."

While they expected the descent of the tardy angel, the doors were broken with axes; and, as the Turks encountered no resistance, their bloodless hands were employed in selecting and securing the multitude of their prisoners. Youth, beauty, and the appearance of wealth attracted their choice; and the right of property was decided among themselves by a prior seizure, by personal strength, and by the authority of command. In the space of an hour, the male captives were bound with cords, the females with their veils and girdles. The senators were linked with their slaves; the prelates with the porters of the church; and young men of a plebeian class with noble maids, whose faces had been invisible to the sun and their nearest kindred. In this common captivity the ranks of society were confounded; the ties of nature were cut asunder: and the inexorable soldier was careless of the father's groans, the tears of the mother, and the lamentations of the children. The loudest in their wailings were the nuns, who were torn from the altar with naked bosoms, outstretched hands, and dishevelled hair; and we should piously believe that few could be tempted to prefer the vigils of the harem to those of the monastery.

Of these unfortunate Greeks, of these domestic animals, whole strings were rudely driven through the streets; and as the conquerors were eager to return for more prey, their trembling pace was quickened with menaces and blows. At the same hour, a similar rapine was exercised in all the churches and monasteries, in all the palaces and habitations of the capital; nor could any place, however sacred or sequestered, protect the persons or the property of the Greeks. Above sixty thousand of this devoted people were transported from the city to the camp and fleet; exchanged or sold, according to the caprice or interest of their masters, and dispersed in remote

[1453 A.D.]
servitude through the provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Among these we may notice some remarkable characters. The historian Phrantzes, first chamberlain and principal secretary, was involved, with his family, in the common lot. After suffering, for months, the hardships of slavery, he recovered his freedom; in the ensuing winter he ventured to Hadrianopolis, and ransomed his wife from the *mir bashi*, or master of horse; but his two children, in the flower of youth and beauty, had been seized for the use of Muhammed himself. The daughter of Phrantzes died in the seraglio, perhaps a virgin; his son, in the fifteenth year of his age, preferred death to infamy, and was stabbed by the hand of the royal lover.

The pride or cruelty of Muhammed would have been most sensibly gratified by the capture of a Roman legate; but the dexterity of Cardinal Isidore eluded the search, and he escaped from Galata in a plebeian habit. The chain and entrance of the outward harbour was still occupied by the Italian ships of merchandise and war. They had signalised their valour in the siege; they embraced the moment of retreat, while the Turkish mariners were dissipated in the pillage of the city. When they hoisted sail, the beach was covered with a suppliant and lamentable crowd; but the means of transportation were scanty; the Venetians and Genoese selected their countrymen; and, notwithstanding the fairest promises of the sultan, the inhabitants of Galata evacuated their houses, and embarked with their most precious effects.

In the fall and the sack of great cities, an historian is condemned to repeat the tale of uniform calamity; the same effects must be produced by the same passions; and when those passions may be indulged without control, small, alas! is the difference between civilised and savage man. Amidst the vague exclamations of bigotry and hatred, the Turks are not accused of a wanton or immoderate effusion of Christian blood; but according to their maxims (the maxims of antiquity) the lives of the vanquished were forfeited; and the legitimate reward of the conqueror was derived from the service, the sale, or the ransom of his captives of both sexes. The wealth of Constantinople had been granted by the sultan to his victorious troops; and the rapine of an hour is more productive than the industry of years. But as no regular division was attempted of the spoil, the respective shares were not determined by merit; and the rewards of valour were stolen away by the followers of the camp, who had declined the toil and danger of the battle. The narrative of their depredations could not afford either amusement or instruction; the total amount, in the last poverty of the empire, has been valued at four millions of ducats; and of this sum, a small part was the property of the Venetians, the Genoese, the Florentines, and the merchants of Ancona. Of these foreigners, the stock was improved in quick and perpetual circulation; but the riches of the Greeks were displayed in idle ostentation, or deeply buried in treasures of ingots and old coin, lest it should be demanded at their hands for the defence of their country.

The profanation and plunder of the monasteries and churches excited the most tragic complaints. The dome of St. Sophia itself, the earthly heaven, the second firmament, the vehicle of the cherubim, the throne of the glory of God, was despoiled of the oblations of ages; and the gold and silver, the pearls and jewels, the vases and sacerdotal ornaments, were most wickedly converted to the service of mankind. After the divine images had been stripped of all that could be valuable to a profane eye, the canvas, or the wood, was torn, or broken, or burned, or trod under foot, or applied, in the stables or the kitchen, to the vilest uses.

The example of sacrilege was imitated, however, from the Latin conquerors of Constantinople; and the treatment which Christ, the Virgin, and the saints had sustained from the guilty Catholic, might be inflicted by the zealous Mussulman on the monuments of idolatry. Perhaps instead of joining the public clamour, a philosopher will observe that in the decline of the arts the workmanship could not be more valuable than the work, and that a fresh supply of visions and miracles would speedily be renewed by the craft of the priest and the credulity of the people. He will more seriously deplore the loss of the Byzantine libraries, which were destroyed or scattered in the general confusion; 120,000 manuscripts are said to have disappeared; ten volumes might be purchased for a single ducat; and the same ignominious price, too high perhaps for a shelf of theology, included the whole works of Aristotle and Homer, the noblest productions of the science and literature of ancient Greece. We may reflect, with pleasure, that an inestimable portion of our classic treasures was safely deposited in Italy; and that the mechanics of a German town had invented an art which derides the havoc of time and barbarism.

From the first hour of the memorable 29th of May, disorder and rapine prevailed in Constantinople, till the eighth hour of the same day; when the sultan himself passed in triumph through the gate of St. Romanus. He was attended by his vizirs, pashas, and guards, each of whom (says a Byzantine historian) was robust as Hercules, dexterous as Apollo, and equal in battle to any ten of the race of ordinary mortals. The conqueror gazed with satisfaction and wonder on the strange though splendid appearance of the domes and palaces, so dissimilar from the style of oriental architecture. In the Hippodrome, or *atmeidan*, his eye was attracted by the twisted column of the three serpents; and, as a trial of his strength, he shattered with his iron mace, or battle-axe, the under-jaw of one of these monsters, which in the eyes of the Turks were the idols or talismans of the city.

At the principal door of St. Sophia, he alighted from his horse, and entered the dome; and such was his jealous regard for that monument of his glory, that on observing a zealous Mussulman in the act of breaking the marble pavement, he admonished him, with his scimitar, that if the spoil and captives were granted to the soldiers, the public and private buildings had been reserved for the prince. By his command the metropolis of the Eastern church was transformed into a mosque; the rich and portable instruments of superstition had been removed; the crosses were thrown down; and the walls, which were covered with images and mosaics, were washed and purified, and restored to a state of naked simplicity.

On the same day, or on the ensuing Friday, the *muezzin* or crier, ascended the most lofty turret, and proclaimed the *ezan*, or public invitation in the name of God and his prophet; the imam preached; and Muhammed II performed the *namaz* of prayer and thanksgiving on the great altar, where the Christian mysteries had so lately been celebrated before the last of the cæsars. From St. Sophia he proceeded to the august but desolate mansion of a hundred successors of the great Constantine; but which, in a few hours, had been stripped of the pomp of royalty. A melancholy reflection on the vicissitudes of human greatness forced itself on his mind; and he repeated an elegant distich of Persian poetry: "The spider hath woven his web in the imperial palace; and the owl hath sung her watch-song on the towers of Afrasiab."

Yet his mind was not satisfied; nor did the victory seem complete, till he was informed of the fate of Constantine — whether he had escaped, or been

[1453 A.D.]

made prisoner, or had fallen in the battle. Two janizaries claimed the honour and reward of his death; the body, under a heap of slain, was discovered by the golden eagles embroidered on his shoes; the Greeks acknowledged with tears the head of their late emperor; and, after exposing the bloody trophy, Muhammed bestowed on his rival the honours of a decent funeral. Clemency was extended to the principal officers of state, of whom several were ransomed at his expense; and during some days he declared himself the friend and father of the vanquished people. But the scene was soon changed; and before his departure the Hippodrome streamed with the blood of his noblest captives. His perfidious cruelty is execrated by the Christians; they adorn with the colours of heroic martyrdom the execution of the grand duke and his two sons; and his death is ascribed to the generous refusal of delivering his children to the tyrant's lust. Yet a Byzantine historian has dropped an unguarded word of conspiracy, deliverance, and Italian succour; such treason may be glorious, but the rebel who bravely ventures, has justly forfeited his life; nor should we blame a conqueror for destroying the enemies whom he can no longer trust. On the 18th of June the victorious sultan returned to Hadrianopolis; and smiled at the base and hollow embassies of the Christian princes, who viewed their approaching ruin in the fall of the Eastern Empire.

Constantinople had been left naked and desolate, without a prince or a people. But she could not be despoiled of the incomparable situation which marks her for the metropolis of a great empire; and the genius of the place will ever triumph over the accidents of time and fortune. Brusa and Hadrianopolis, the ancient seats of the Ottomans, sank into provincial towns; and Muhammed established his own residence, and that of his successors, on the same commanding spot which had been chosen by Constantine. The fortifications of Galatâ, which might afford a shelter to the Latins, were prudently destroyed; but the damage of the Turkish cannon was soon repaired. As the entire property of the soil and buildings, whether public or private, or profane or sacred, was now transferred to the conqueror, he first separated a space of eight furlongs from the point of the triangle for the establishment of his seraglio or palace. In the new character of a mosque, the cathedral of St. Sophia was endowed with an ample revenue, crowned with lofty minarets, and surrounded with groves and fountains, for the devotion and refreshment of the Moslems. The same model was imitated in the *jami* or royal mosques; and the first of these were built, by Muhammed himself, on the ruins of the church of the holy apostles and the tombs of the Greek emperors.

Constantinople no longer appertains to the Roman historian; nor shall we enumerate the civil and religious edifices that were profaned or erected by its Turkish masters; the population was speedily renewed; and before the end of September, five thousand families of Anatolia and Romania had obeyed the royal mandate, which enjoined them, under pain of death, to occupy their new habitations in the capital. The throne of Muhammed was guarded by the numbers and fidelity of his Moslem subjects; but his rational policy aspired to collect the remnant of the Greeks; and they returned in crowds as soon as they were assured of their lives, their liberties, and the free exercise of their religion. In the election and investiture of a patriarch, the ceremonial of the Byzantine court was revived and imitated. With a mixture of satisfaction and horror, they beheld the sultan on his throne; who delivered into the hands of Gennadius the crosier or pastoral staff, the symbol of his ecclesiastical office; who conducted the patriarch to the gate of the seraglio, presented him with a horse richly caparisoned, and directed

the vizirs and pashas to lead him to the palace which had been allotted for his residence. The churches of Constantinople were shared between the two religions, their limits were marked; and, till it was infringed by Selim, the grandson of Muhammed, the Greeks enjoyed above sixty years the benefit of this equal partition.[1]

## END OF THE COMNENI AND PALÆOLOGI

The final extinction of the last two dynasties which have reigned in Constantinople terminates the decline and fall of the Roman Empire in the East. The despots of the Morea,[2] Demetrius and Thomas, the two surviving brothers of the name of Palæologus, were astonished by the death of the emperor Constantine, and the ruin of the monarchy. Hopeless of defence, they prepared, with the noble Greeks who adhered to their fortune, to seek a refuge in Italy, beyond the reach of the Ottoman thunder. Their first apprehensions were dispelled by the victorious sultan, who contented himself with a tribute of twelve thousand ducats; and while his ambition explored the continent and the islands in search of prey, he indulged the Morea in a respite of seven years. But this respite was a period of grief, discord, and misery. The *hexamilion*, the rampart of the isthmus, so often raised and so often subverted, could not long be defended by three hundred Italian archers; the keys of Corinth were seized by the Turks; they returned from their summer excursions with a train of captives and spoil; and the complaints of the injured Greeks were heard with indifference and disdain. The Albanians, a vagrant tribe of shepherds and robbers, filled the peninsula with rapine and murder; the two despots implored the dangerous and humiliating aid of a neighbouring pasha; and when he had quelled the revolt, his lessons inculcated the rule of their future conduct.

Neither the ties of blood, nor the oaths which they repeatedly pledged in the communion and before the altar, nor the stronger pressure of necessity, could reconcile or suspend their domestic quarrels. They ravaged each other's patrimony with fire and sword; the alms and succours of the West were consumed in civil hostility; and their power was only exerted in savage and arbitrary executions. The distress and revenge of the weaker rival invoked their supreme lord; and, in the season of maturity and revenge, Muhammed declared himself the friend of Demetrius, and marched into the Morea with an irresistible force. When he had taken possession of Sparta, "You are too weak," said the sultan, "to control this turbulent province; I will take your daughter to my bed; and you shall pass the remainder of your life in security and honour."

Demetrius sighed and obeyed; surrendered his daughter and his castles; followed to Hadrianopolis his sovereign and son, and received for his own main-

[1 With regard to the meaning of the "fall" of Constantinople and the hope of its rise, it may be well to quote the theory of the Russophile historian, Gelzer e: "The month of May, 1453, had dragged the Byzantine Empire finally to its grave. The Greek supremacy had long been a thing of the past; the hollow phantom of it was now to vanish away. But Byzantium has found a mighty heir. The czar of Russia took a princess of the house of Palæologus to wife; the crown of Constantine Monomachus was placed on the head of the autocrat of all the Russias in the Kremlin. The Russian Empire is *de facto* the sequel to the Byzantine. And if ever St. Sophia is to be restored to the true faith, and Asia Minor delivered from the hideous misrule of the Turk, it can only come to pass through the agency of the czar of Russia. None but the czar of Russia, 'the defender of the orthodox faith,' and inspired with a sense of the obligations involved in his great office, can become emperor of Constantinople."]

[2 The modern name for the Peloponnesus.]

[1453 A.D.]

tenance, and that of his followers, a city in Thrace, and the adjacent isles of Imbros, Lemnos, and Samothrace. He was joined the next year by a companion of misfortune, the last of the Comnenian race, who, after the taking of Constantinople by the Latins, had founded a new empire on the coast of the Black Sea. In the progress of his Anatolian conquests Muhammed invested with a fleet and army the capital of David, who presumed to style himself emperor of Trebizond; and the negotiation was comprised in a short and peremptory question, "Will you secure your life and treasures by resigning your kingdom; or would you rather forfeit your kingdom, your treasures, and your life?" The feeble Comnenus was subdued by his own fears, and the example of a Mussulman neighbour, the prince of Sinope; who, on a similar summons, had yielded a fortified city with four hundred cannon and ten or twelve thousand soldiers. The capitulation of Trebizond was faithfully performed; and the emperor with his family was transported to a castle in Romania; but on a slight suspicion of corresponding with the Persian king, David and the whole Comnenian race were sacrificed to the jealousy or avarice of the conqueror.

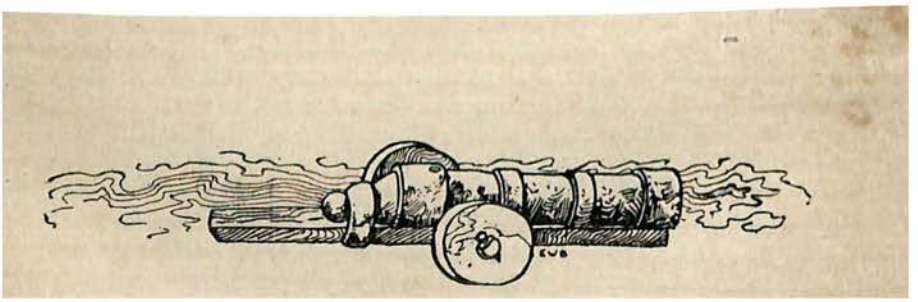
Nor could the name of father long protect the unfortunate Demetrius from exile and confiscation; his abject submission moved the pity and contempt of the sultan; his followers were transplanted to Constantinople; and his poverty was alleviated by a pension of fifty thousand aspers, till a monastic habit and a tardy death released Palæologus from an earthly master. It is not easy to pronounce whether the servitude of Demetrius, or the exile of his brother Thomas, be the most inglorious. On the conquest of the Morea, the despot escaped to Corfu, and from thence to Italy, with some naked adherents; his name, his sufferings, and the head of the apostle St. Andrew entitled him to the hospitality of the Vatican; and his misery was prolonged by a pension of six thousand ducats from the pope and cardinals. His two sons, Andrew and Manuel, were educated in Italy; but the eldest, contemptible to his enemies and burdensome to his friends, was degraded by the baseness of his life and marriage. A title was his sole inheritance; and that inheritance he successively sold to the kings of France and Aragon. During his transient prosperity, Charles VIII was ambitious of joining the empire of the East with the kingdom of Naples; in a public festival, he assumed the appellation and the purple of augustus; the Greeks rejoiced, and the Ottoman already trembled at the approach of the French chivalry. Manuel Palæologus, the second son, was tempted to revisit his native country; his return might be grateful, and could not be dangerous, to the Porte; he was maintained at Constantinople in safety and ease; and an honourable train of Christians and Moslems attended him to the grave. If there be some animals of so generous a nature that they refuse to propagate in a domestic state, the last of the imperial race must be ascribed to an inferior kind; he accepted from the sultan's liberality two beautiful females; and his surviving son was lost in the habit and religion of a Turkish slave.

The importance of Constantinople was felt and magnified in its loss; the pontificate of Nicholas V, however peaceful and prosperous, was dishonoured by the fall of the Eastern Empire; and the grief and terror of the Latins revived, or seemed to revive, the old enthusiasm of the Crusades. Had the union of the Christians corresponded with their bravery; had every country, from Sweden to Naples, supplied a just proportion of cavalry and infantry, of men and money, it is indeed probable that Constantinople would have been delivered, and that the Turks might have been chased beyond the Hellespont or the Euphrates. But the secretary of the emperor, who com-

posed every epistle, and attended every meeting, Æneas Sylvius, a statesman and orator, describes from his own experience the repugnant state and spirit of Christendom. "It is a body," says he, "without a head; a republic without laws or magistrates. The pope and the emperor may shine as lofty titles, as splendid images; but they are unable to command, and none are willing to obey; every state has a separate prince, and every prince has a separate interest. What eloquence could unite so many discordant and hostile powers under the same standard? Could they be assembled in arms, who would dare to assume the office of general? What order could be maintained — what military discipline? Who would undertake to feed such an enormous multitude? Who would understand their various languages, or direct their stranger and incompatible manners? What mortal could reconcile the English with the French, Genoa with Aragon, the Germans with the natives of Hungary and Bohemia? If a small number enlisted in the holy war, they must be overthrown by the infidels; if many, by their own weight and confusion."

Yet the same Æneas, when he was raised to the papal throne, under the name of Pius II, devoted his life to the prosecution of the Turkish War. In the council of Mantua, he excited some sparks of a false or feeble enthusiasm; but when the pontiff appeared at Ancona, to embark in person with the troops, engagements vanished in excuses; a precise day was adjourned to an indefinite term; and his effective army consisted of some German pilgrims, whom he was obliged to disband with indulgences and alms.

Regardless of futurity, his successors and the powers of Italy were involved in the schemes of present and domestic ambition; and the distance or proximity of each object determined, in their eyes, its apparent magnitude. A more enlarged view of their interest would have taught them to maintain a defensive and naval war against the common enemy; and the support of Scanderbeg (Iskander Bey) and his brave Albanians might have prevented the subsequent invasion of the kingdom of Naples. The siege and sack of Otranto by the Turks diffused a general consternation; and Pope Sixtus was preparing to fly beyond the Alps, when the storm was instantly dispelled by the death of Muhammed II, in the fifty-first year of his age. His lofty genius aspired to the conquest of Italy: he was possessed of a strong city and a capacious harbour; and the same reign might have been decorated with the trophies of the new and the ancient Rome.[d]



# BRIEF REFERENCE-LIST OF AUTHORITIES BY CHAPTERS

[The letter [a] is reserved for Editorial Matter.]

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## CHAPTER II. THE REIGN OF THEODOSIUS THE YOUNGER TO THE ELEVATION OF JUSTINIAN

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[For a further list of works on the Later Roman Empire in the East, see the General Bibliography of Roman History in Volume VI.]

# BOOK II

# THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST

## *INTRODUCTION*

## HISTORY IN OUTLINE OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE

### A PRELIMINARY SURVEY COMPRISING A CURSORY VIEW OF THE SWEEP OF EVENTS AND A TABLE OF CHRONOLOGY

HAVING followed the fortunes of the Later Roman Empire in the East to the final collapse, we return now to the ancient seat of the Roman Empire, where we are to witness a process at once of disintegration and of development — disintegration of the old Roman influence, development of civilisation and power in the new peoples of the north. Our caption "Later Roman Empire in the West" or "Western Empire" must be understood as applying rather loosely to the peoples now under consideration. We have already (in Vol. VI) witnessed the overthrow of Rome by the Goths and the deposition of the last legitimate emperor of the old Roman line. It has been urged, however, that no really critical alteration in the sweep of world-historic events attended this change.

The fall of Rome marks a convenient epoch in the retrospective view of the historian; it was scarcely an event that could greatly have impressed contemporary witnesses. Odoacer acknowledged the authority of Zeno, emperor of the West, and when Odoacer himself was assailed and overthrown by Theodoric, the latter acted under the influence and authority of the same emperor. And for some centuries the rulers of Italy regarded themselves either as representatives or opponents of the Roman Empire. The Goths, the Lombards, and the Franks in turn invaded Italy and came to dominate her affairs. Yet in theory the Western Empire was still the Roman Empire — though Rome herself had long since fallen from her old time position as capital. It will be recalled that as early as the time of Diocletian the seat of government for the Western division of the empire was transferred to Mediolanum (Milan), and that, at a later day, Honorius made Ravenna his capital. Still the traditional glory of old Rome could not be altogether effaced, and as time went on the ancient city came once more to be regarded as the centre of Italian influence. It was in Rome that Charlemagne was crowned as emperor of the West in the year 800, and his successors repaired to the same ancient capital to receive the imperial dignity for some centuries afterward.

Meantime the real centre of world influence in the West had been shifting to the north. The true capital of the empire of Charlemagne was Aachen

(Aix la Chapelle). The land of his nativity and the seat of his chief activities lay to the north of the Alps. In a word, notwithstanding the retention of the old name, the Roman emperor of the West was ruler over a principality that differed radically from the old Roman principality. There was no longer any life in the Latin race. Its time of decadence had come. All hope for progress and development, all prospect of new world influences, lay with the peoples of the north — peoples of wonderful capacities, whose greatest traits could only hope to be developed after many generations of civilisation. A barbarian race cannot attain at once to all the fruits of higher culture. Just as in the early day the Greek and Roman worked their way slowly up to the high plane of world historical influence through many pre-historic generations, so these new races of the north must be given time for development before they could hope to rival in the fruits of their civilisation the works of the old empires of the south. They were to make progress rapidly, partly because they had the old civilisation as a model after which to build; but it was not to be expected that even this aid would enable them to cross the chasm between barbarism and higher civilisation at a bound.

In point of fact, they required some centuries for this development. And since during this time the old civilisation at the south had ceased to be productive, these centuries are known to posterity as the Dark Ages. Nevertheless, there are here and there rays of light in the gloom. At its worst the Western world did not recede into utter barbarism, though it certainly sank far back from the intellectual level of the earlier day. Fortunately, scholarship sufficed to produce records that enable us to form as complete a picture of the life and development of the period as need be desired. Following our custom we shall first outline the sweep of events in chronological epitome before turning to the detailed narrative.

## FROM THE STIRRING OF THE HUNS TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE VISIGOTHIC KINGDOM (375–415 A.D.)

The intrusion of the barbaric tribes from the north into the Roman Empire is one of the main events of world history. The dozen or so Indo-Germanic peoples settled between the Volga and the Rhine, together with the Huns, a race believed to be of Mongolian origin, are chiefly concerned in this movement. It begins towards the end of the fourth century A.D., when the Huns and the Alani invade the territory of the Ostrogoths in southern Russia. The latter unite with their invaders and proceed against the Visigoths in eastern Hungary and Rumania. The Christian element of

A.D.

the Visigoths, owing to disputes with the Romans, advances to the west.

378 The imperial forces oppose them at Hadrianopolis. The emperor Valens is slain.

382 His successor Theodosius makes peace with them for pay and lands.

396 **Alaric** the Visigoth chieftain, not receiving his pay from Arcadius, marches into the Peloponnesus, ravaging as he goes. Stilicho opposes but allows him to escape. Alaric installed as dux in eastern Illyricum.

403 Alaric returns to Illyricum after an unsuccessful attempt to invade Italy.

405–6 Defeat of Radagaisus and his German bands who have invaded Italy. The Vandals, Suevi, and Alani leave the Danube, advance to the Rhine, are driven off by the Gauls, and

409 settle in Spain (see Visigothic kingdom). Meanwhile the Salic Franks are leaving the Rhine delta and settling in northern Gaul (see Merovingian kings) and the Burgundians on the middle Rhine (see kingdom of Burgundy).

410 Alaric on his second invasion captures Rome and sacks it. Death of Alaric.

411 **Atawulf**, brother of Alaric's wife, leads the Visigoths into Gaul. He takes with him Honorius' sister, a hostage, and marries her (414).

415 Hard pressed by the Romans Atawulf goes to Spain and conquers Barcelona. He is murdered. **Sigeric** succeeds him, reigning only a few days. **Wallia** succeeds. He

makes a treaty of alliance with Honorius and receives territory in southern Gaul, under Roman supremacy, and the Visigothic kingdom of Tolosa [Tolosa (Toulouse) the capital] is founded. This alliance, the first sign of fusion between the Latin and German people, may be said to mark *the beginning of the modern world.*

## THE VISIGOTHIC KINGDOM IN FRANCE AND SPAIN (415–711 A.D.)

At the time of foundation of the Visigothic kingdom there exist two states established by the barbaric peoples — the Suevi and the Vandals, who, as we have seen, invaded and settled in Spain (409). The Suevi have six kings until they are reduced by the Visigoths in 469. **Godigisdus** or **Modigisdus** and his son **Gunderic** rule the Vandals until 425, when **Genseric**, brother of Gunderic succeeds. In 429 Genseric, on invitation it is said of Boniface the Roman governor of Africa, leads the whole of his people and a portion of the Alani to Carthage (see kingdom of the Vandals in Africa).

415–418 **Wallia** as the ally of Rome wages war on the Vandals, Suevi, and Alani in Spain.

420 **Theodoric I**, son of Alaric, elected king on death of Wallia. The Visigoths begin to free themselves from Rome.

429 The Vandals leave for Africa.

439 Defeat of the Romans by Theodoric at Tolosa. Treaty of peace with Avitus.

451 The Romans and Visigoths unite against the invasion of Attila, king of the Huns. Defeat of Attila, at battle of Châlons in which Theodoric falls. His son **Torismond** succeeds.

452 Torismond killed by his brother, **Theodoric II.**

456 As the ally of Rome, Theodoric crosses into Spain and nearly exterminates the Suevi in battle near Astorga. He strengthens his own power and makes no attempt to restore the country to Rome.

466 Theodoric killed by his brother **Euric.**

469 Euric makes the Suevi tributary. The Visigoths become completely independent of Rome. Euric is a legislator as well as a warrior and publishes a code of laws.

484 Death of Euric. His son **Alaric II** succeeds. During his reign the code *Breviarium Alaricianum* is published. Founded on the Theodosian code, it impresses Roman institutions and ideas on the whole people.

507 Death of Alaric in a battle with Clovis, the Merovingian king, at Voulon. **Gesalric** his natural son succeeds. The Ostrogoths unite with the Visigoths and defeat the Merovingians at Arles. Theodoric the Great takes possession of most of the Visigothic possessions in southern France.

511 **Amalaric**, legitimate son of Alaric II, succeeds. He is grandson of Theodoric the Great, who rules his realm for him. The capital transferred from Tolosa to Toledo. Amalaric marries daughter of Clovis.

526 Death of Theodoric the Great. The Ostro- and Visigothic kingdoms become definitely separated.

531 Death of Amalaric in a battle with Merovingian Franks. **Theudes** succeeds.

542 Theudes repels a Frankish invasion of Spain.

548 **Theudisela** succeeds Theudes.

549 **Agila** succeeds. In his reign the Romans recover many towns on the sea coast in an attempt to regain the peninsula.

554 Imprisonment and murder of Agila. **Atanagild**, his political opponent, succeeds.

567 **Liuva** or **Levua I** succeeds. **Leuvigild** becomes associated with him the following year.

572 Death of Liuva. Leuvigild sole king. He recovers some of the towns taken by the Romans.

584 Final conquest of the Suevi. Their country becomes a province of the Visigothic kingdom.

586 **Recared I** succeeds. In his reign, 587, the Visigoths are converted from Arianism to orthodox Catholicism.

601 Death of Recared, succeeded by **Liuva II.**

603 Assassination of Liuva succeeded by **Witteric.** He recovers some towns from the Romans.

610 **Gundemar** succeeds Witteric who is murdered.

612 **Sisibut** succeeds.

621 **Recared II**, who is followed the same year by **Suintila.** All the territory seized by the Romans is regained. The whole peninsula is Visigothic for the first time.

631 Suintila dethroned and **Sisenando** made king.
636 **Chintella** succeeds, followed by
640 **Tulga** or **Tulea.**
642 **Cindasuinto** becomes king.
649 **Recesuinto** becomes associated on the throne.
652 Recesuinto sole ruler at death of Cindasuinto.
672 **Wamba** becomes king.
680 Dethronement of Wamba. He retires to a monastery. **Ervigius** succeeds.
687 **Ergica** or **Ergiza** succeeds.
698 **Witiza** becomes associate king.
702 Witiza sole king.
709 **Roderic** "the last of the Goths" usurps the throne.
710 The first Saracens land in Spain.
711 Saracen army under Tarik invades Spain. Battle of Xeres. Defeat and death of Roderic. The Saracens easily accomplish the conquest of Spain as far as the mountainous districts in the north. End of the Visigothic kingdom.

## KINGDOM OF THE VANDALS IN AFRICA (439–534 A.D.)

429 The entire Vandal nation settled in Spain, numbering about 80,000, under the leadership of Genseric, crosses over to Africa, invited, it is said, by Boniface, governor of Africa, then in disgrace at the court of Ravenna. These Vandals pursue a rapid plan of conquest, and are soon in the possession of the whole of Roman Africa except Carthage, Hippo, and Cirta.
431 Capture of Hippo after long siege. Death of St. Augustine.
435 Treaty between Genseric and Valentinian III, by which the Romans retain only Carthage and vicinity.
439 Without any provocation **Genseric** or **Gaiseric** suddenly attacks and captures Carthage. He dates the foundation of his kingdom from this year. His reign is one of warfare. He builds a large fleet for piratical purposes and makes Carthage the leading maritime power of the Mediterranean. The Catholic Christians are much persecuted.
455 Capture and sack of Rome by Genseric, at invitation of Valentinian's widow Eudoxia.
477 **Huneric**, Genseric's eldest son, married to Eudocia, daughter of Eudoxia, succeeds at death of Genseric. An ardent Arian, he persecutes the Catholics.
484 **Gunthamund** or **Gundamund**, cousin of Huneric, succeeds him at his death.
496 **Thrasamund** becomes king on Gunthamund's death. The people are rapidly becoming degenerate through effects of climate, luxury, and vice.
523 On death of Thrasamund, **Hilderic**, son of Huneric, succeeds. He favours Catholicism and restores bishops and churches.
531 The unpopular Hilderic dethroned and imprisoned, his cousin **Gelimer** placed on the throne.
533 To avenge the wrongs of Hilderic, Justinian sends Belisarius to invade kingdom. Capture of Carthage. Battle of Tricamarum and rout of the Vandals. Flight of Gelimer.
534 Surrender of Gelimer. End of the kingdom. The Vandals carried to Constantinople and sent to serve against the Parthians. A few hundred escape to Africa and take part in an insurrection against Belisarius which he quells with difficulty (536). The Vandals disappear from history.

## THE HERULIANS AND OSTROGOTHS IN ITALY (476–555 A.D.)

Attila, king of the Huns, does not succeed in founding a state in the Roman Empire. At his death (453) the kingdom of the Huns falls to pieces. The Gepids recover their liberty; the Slavonic tribes follow suit, and gradually make their way into Eastern Europe, their present home.
475 **Odoacer** or **Odovaker**, leader of the Herulians, a military commander in the employ of the emperor, is moved by the act of Orestes in deposing Julius Nepos to attack Orestes in Pavia. Capture and execution of Orestes.
476 This leads to the deposition of the emperor Romulus Augustulus, son of Orestes, and Odoacer is proclaimed king. The emperor Zeno at Constantinople, who, with his successors, remains only titular emperor of Italy, confers the patrician dignity on Odoacer.

488 Zeno commissions Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, to undertake the affairs of Italy.
493 Defeat of Odoacer by **Theodoric the Great** at Ravenna. Theodoric kills Odoacer and becomes king of Italy. He settles at Ravenna, the capital of the Western Empire since the time of Honorius, and assumes name of Flavius. Is recognised by Anastasius at Constantinople. Though professing allegiance to Rome, Theodoric establishes an independent monarchy.
507 After defeat of the Visigoths at Voulon, Theodoric assists them in defeating the Merovingians at Arles. Theodoric adds most of the Visigothic possessions in France to his kingdom. He also governs the Visigothic kingdom for his young grandson Amalaric.
524 Theodoric has the philosopher Boethius and his father-in-law Symmachus put to death for their efforts on behalf of Albinus.
526 Death of Theodoric. His young grandson **Athalaric** succeeds under regency of his mother, Amalasuntha.
534 Athalaric dies of the plague. **Theodatus** or **Theodahad**, a nephew of Theodoric, is elected king. He murders Athalaric's mother, and in consequence brings on a war with the empire.
536 Theodatus defeated by Belisarius and killed by his own soldiers. **Witiges** is elected king. Belisarius continues the war against the Ostrogoths.
537–538 Siege of Rome by Belisarius.
540 Witiges captured by Belisarius and taken to Constantinople where he dies three years later. **Theodebald** or **Hildibald** elected.
541 Theodebald gains a victory over Belisarius, but is murdered by his body-guard, and **Eraric** succeeds him. He enters into negotiations with Justinian, which displeases his subjects, and **Totila** or **Baduila** is elected in his place.
542 Totila captures Naples.
546 Totila captures Rome. Belisarius recovers it the following year.
552 Narses replaces Belisarius in Italy. Defeat and death of Totila at battle of Taginæ. **Theias** or **Teias** is elected king.
553 Defeat and death of Theias at the Draco. The Ostrogoths conclude the war on condition that they be allowed to leave Italy. Failure of the expedition of the Alamannian leaders, Leutharis and Butilin, to oppose Narses. Italy once more becomes part of the Roman Empire.

## THE EXARCHATE OVER ALL ITALY (553–568 A.D.)

553 **Narses** rules Italy in the Byzantine emperors' names as an exarch. He holds court at Ravenna.
562 Narses takes Verona and Brixia (Brescia).
565 Narses recalled to Constantinople by an insulting message from the empress. It is said that on account of this he invites the Lombard chief, Alboin, to seize Italy. **Longinus** succeeds him.
568 Invasion of Alboin, the king of the Lombards, assisted by the Gepids. He wrests northern and central Italy as far as the Tiber from the Byzantines. Venice, Ravenna, Genoa and the Liguria, Naples, and southern Italy except Beneventum, continue to form the exarchate, and their history is part of the eastern division of the empire. We must now distinguish three centres of rule in Italy — Pavia, the Lombard capital; Ravenna, the strong seat of the Byzantine exarchate, while at Rome, to which the Lombard power is only feebly extended, the pope is fast acquiring strength and influence.

## THE LOMBARD KINGDOM OF ITALY (568–774 A.D.)

**Alboin**, before his invasion of Italy, had conquered the Gepids with the aid of the Avars (567). Then together with the Gepids he sweeps down upon Italy in 568.
571 Capture of Pavia after a three years' resistance. Alboin makes it his capital.
573 Murder of Alboin by his wife, Rosamund, because, it is said, he attempts to make her drink from the skull of her father, the Gepid king. **Cleph** succeeds. He extends the Lombard conquests into southern Italy.
575 Cleph is assassinated, and the dukes do not elect another sovereign for ten years. No central power.
584 Election of **Authari**, son of Cleph, to the throne.

588 Smaragdus, the Byzantine exarch, forms a coalition of the Franks, Romans, and Avars to destroy the Lombards. It comes to nothing. The Lombards begin to be converted to orthodoxy.
590 **Agilulf** succeeds Authari. Territory in northeast Italy, including Cremona, conquered from the exarch. Continuance of conversion to orthodox Catholicism by Gregory the Great.
593 Agilulf threatens to invade Rome, but is bought off by Gregory.
615 **Adalwald** succeeds his father; he is poisoned, and
625 **Ariwald** elected. He is an Arian.
636 **Rothari** succeeds to the throne. He conquers Genoa and the Liguria from the exarchate.
642 The exarch and the Romans suffer a great defeat at hands of Rothari on the banks of the Scultenna (Tanaro).
644 Publication of the Lombard code of laws.
652 **Rodwald** succeeds his father.
653 Assassination of Rodwald. **Aribert I**, a Bavarian, elected king. He proscribes Arianism.
661 Aribert succeeded by his sons **Perctarit** and **Godebert**.
662 **Grimwald**, duke of Benevento, usurps the throne. He completes conversion of the Lombards.
671 **Perctarit** reinstated.
686 Death of Perctarit. His son **Cunincbert** succeeds.
700 **Liutbert** succeeds. Is dethroned by
701 **Raginbert**. **Aribert II** also king the same year.
712 **Ansprand** defeats Aribert in battle and takes throne. Death of Ansprand. **Liutprand**, his son, succeeds. Liutprand is a great prince and sets out to complete the subjugation of Italy, but succeeds only in breaking up the independence of the two southern duchies of Spoleto and Benevento.
726 On account of iconoclastic controversy, Gregory II allies himself with Liutprand and throws off allegiance to the Byzantine Empire. The autonomy of Rome is established.
728 Liutprand captures Classis near Ravenna, but the exarch Eutychius retakes it the following year. The pope appeals to Charles Martel for aid against the Lombards in vain.
744 Liutprand's nephew **Hildebrand** succeeds on his death, but is shortly deposed and **Ratchis** made king. He continues Liutprand's plan of conquest but is also deposed,
749 and enters a monastery. His brother **Aistulf** succeeds.
751 Aistulf captures Ravenna. The Byzantine Empire loses all possessions in central Italy. Pepin, Austrasian mayor of the palace, responds to the continued appeals of the pope for assistance against the Lombards.
753 Pepin forces Aistulf to sue for peace.
755 Aistulf violates peace and with the northern and Beneventine Lombards attacks Rome. Pepin comes a second time, and forces Aistulf to relinquish all his acquisitions. Ravenna, Pentapolis, and other territory turned over to the pope, and the first foundations of the papal states are laid. The Byzantine possessions are confined to southern Italy. Venice remains independent though nominally subject to Constantinople.
756 Death of Aistulf. **Desiderius**, duke of Tuscany, succeeds. He allies himself with the Greeks against the pope and the dukes of Spoleto and Benevento.
771 On accession of Pope Adrian I, quarrels with papacy break out. Desiderius plunders the territory of Rome. Adrian appeals to Charlemagne, who is Desiderius' father-in-law, for help.
774 Charlemagne captures Desiderius in Pavia, and assumes title of king of the Lombards. End of the Lombard kingdom. The Lombards become incorporated with the Italian population, and their country is one of the great provinces of Italy, until the Lombard cities regain their independence (1183).

## THE FRANKISH KINGS AND EMPERORS IN NORTH AND CENTRAL ITALY (774–888 A.D.)

774–781 **Charlemagne (Charles the Great)** remains the king of the Lombards. The pope retains the territory granted him by Pepin.
780 The pope summons Charles against a coalition of the Byzantines and the dukes of Spoleto and Benevento.

781 Charlemagne crowns his son **Pepin** "king of Italy." This is the first time the title is used.
786 Charlemagne reduces Arichis of Benevento to subjection. The Italian dominions now extend to Calabria, although Benevento never becomes entirely dependent.
800 Coronation of Charlemagne as emperor.
812 Death of Pepin. His son **Bernhard** succeeds.
817 The emperor Louis I, le Débonnaire, arranges for his succession, which arrangement does not please Bernhard and he rebels. **Louis** captures Bernhard, puts out his eyes, and takes the crown of Italy. Death of Bernhard.
822 Louis makes his son **Lothair I** king of Italy.
840 Death of Louis.
843 At Treaty of Verdun, Lothair confirmed as emperor, receives Italy as part of his kingdom.
844 **Louis II**, son of Lothair, is crowned king of Italy.
850 Louis shares the imperial dignity with his father.
855 Lothair gives up the reins of government, and retiring to a monastery, dies same year.
875 On death of Louis, his uncle **Charles the Bald** invades Italy and seizes the crown. The pope crowns him emperor.
877 The pope summons Charles to drive the Saracens from Italy, but he dies on the way. **Carloman of Bavaria**, son of Ludwig the German, seizes the crown of Italy.
879 On death of Carloman the crown comes to his brother **Charles the Fat.**
888 Deposition of Charles the Fat. The empire which, during his reign, has been restored to the extent of Charlemagne's dominions is again sundered.

## THE QUASI-ITALIAN SUCCESSION (888–962 A.D.)

888 Italy (excepting, of course, the papal dominions and the territory under control of the Byzantine Empire) is now divided between Berengar of Friuli (grandson of Louis le Débonnaire) and Guido of Spoleto. The estate of Lombardy chooses **Berengar I** king.
889 **Guido**, disappointed in his hopes of obtaining the crown of France, returns to Italy and drives Berengar into Germany.
891 Guido and his son Lambert crowned emperors by Pope Formosus.
894 Death of Guido. His son **Lambert** succeeds as sole emperor.
896 The East Frankish king Arnulf invades Italy on request of the exiled Berengar, and is crowned emperor.
898 Death of Lambert. Berengar regains his kingdom. During these struggles the Saracens make frequent incursions into Italy.
900 The Magyars invade Italy and badly defeat Berengar. This is the cause of much dissatisfaction with Berengar among the nobles.
901 **Louis of Provence** invades Italy, and is crowned emperor **Louis III** by Benedict IV. Berengar flees to Germany, but returns and regains possession of his kingdom the following year (902).
905 After many struggles Berengar captures Louis and puts out his eyes.
915 Berengar crowned emperor by John X in reward for exertions against the Saracens.
921 Conspiracy of nobles against Berengar; the crown offered to Rudolf II of Burgundy. Berengar calls in aid of the Magyars.
924 The people of Verona, disgusted at Berengar's alliance, slay him. The Hungarians pillage Pavia and withdraw from Italy. **Rudolf of Burgundy** succeeds.
926 Rudolf retires to Burgundy, owing to lack of support in Italy. **Hugo**, count of Arles, is placed on the throne by a powerful party.
931 Hugo associates his son, **Lothair II**, in the kingship. They are little more than puppets in the hands of a demoralised aristocracy. Hugo fails in attempt to obtain imperial dignity. He renounces his possessions in Provence to Rudolf on condition that the latter make no further attempts upon Italy.
946 Berengar, marquis of Ivrea, takes up arms against Hugo on account of his tyranny and oppression. Hugo dethroned. Lothair retains title, but Berengar is real ruler.
950 Death of Lothair. **Berengar II** and his son **Adalbert** are elected kings of Italy. Berengar tries to compel Adelheid, widow of Lothair, to marry Adalbert. On her refusal he treats her most cruelly.
951 On account of Adelheid's wrongs Otto I, the East Frankish king, invades Italy and compels the two kings to become his vassals. Otto marries Adelheid.
962 Deposition of Berengar and Adalbert. Otto crowned emperor. The kingdoms of Italy and Germany (East Francia) are united.

## THE FIRST KINGDOM OF BURGUNDY (413–534 A.D.)

The Burgundians, a Gothic tribe, invade Gaul in 275, but are driven out by the emperor Probus. Returning in 287 they settle on the Neckar and the Rhine, and

413 They establish a kingdom with **Gundicar**, their leader, as king.

436 **Gunderis** succeeds his father. He extends the kingdom, which reaches from the Saône and lower Rhone and from Dijon, to the Mediterranean.

470 The kingdom is divided among Gunderis' four sons: **Chilperic, Gundobald, Godegisil,** and **Gondemar,** but it is soon reunited under Gundobald, who makes the Burgundian code of laws.

516 **Sigismund** succeeds his father, Gundobald, and he in turn is succeeded by **Gundimar.**

534 Conquest of the kingdom of Burgundy by the sons of Clovis. It forms a part of the Frankish kingdom.

561 The Frankish kingdom is redivided among the sons of Clotaire. Burgundy a separate kingdom until 613 (see Merovingian kings).

## THE SECOND KINGDOM OF BURGUNDY OR ARLES (879–1032 A.D.)

When Carloman seizes the kingdom of Italy in 877 he compels Boson, the imperial governor of Charles the Bald, to retire to France, where he possesses himself of Provence and neighbouring territories.

879 **Boson** founds the kingdom Cisjuran or Lower Burgundy with capital at Arles.

882 Boson compelled to recognise Charles the Fat as his suzerain.

887 Death of Boson. His son **Louis** succeeds for three years under his mother's regency.

888 **Rudolf I,** a Guelf count, establishes the kingdom of Transjuran or Upper Burgundy. His country consists of modern Switzerland as far east as the Reuss.

901 Louis of Provence, or Cisjuran Burgundy, invades Italy and is crowned emperor Louis III.

905 Berengar regains possession of Italy and puts out Louis' eyes. Louis returns to Arles.

911 Death of Rudolf I of Upper Burgundy. His son, **Rudolf II,** succeeds.

921 Rudolf invited to invade Italy. He is proclaimed king. He becomes real ruler on death of Berengar, 924.

925 Hugo, count of Arles, who is ruling in the name of the blind Louis, compels Rudolf to retire and takes the throne of Italy.

927 Death of Louis. **Hugo** succeeds him.

931 Hugo exchanges the Cisjuran kingdom for Rudolf's claim on Italy. The Cisjuran and Transjuran kingdoms of Burgundy become united under Rudolf.

937 Death of Rudolf. His son **Conrad** succeeds.

993 Death of Conrad. His son, **Rudolf III,** succeeds.

1016 Rudolf cedes the kingdom to the emperor Henry II, but is to remain in possession until his death.

1032 Death of Rudolf. The kingdom claimed by Eudes, count of Champagne. But the emperor, Conrad II, causes himself to be crowned king of Burgundy, and the next year, on death of Eudes, enters into peaceful possession of the country. Burgundy becomes part of the Holy Roman Empire.

## THE KINGDOM OF THURINGIA

The Thuringians in the fourth and fifth century have an extensive kingdom from the Elbe to the Danube. In 531, when **Hermanfrid** is king, they are attacked by the Merovingian Franks (sons of Clovis) and the Saxons who become allied for this purpose. Hermanfrid is defeated and slain. The northern part of the kingdom is taken by the Saxons and the southern becomes Frankish territory.

## THE KINGDOM OF THE SALIC FRANKS OR MEROVINGIANS (486–751 A.D.)

The Salic Franks or Merovingians, together with the Ripuarian Franks, have, by the beginning of the fifth century, settled along the Rhine and its tributaries from Mainz to the sea. They serve in the legions of the empire. In 406 they offer great resistance to the Vandals, Suevi, and Alani, who cross the Rhine and finally settle in Spain. The Salians begin to spread over northern Gaul, and in 429, under their chief **Clodion,** they win a great battle at Cambray and reach the Loire.

447 **Merovæus** or **Mérovée**, son-in-law of Clodion, succeeds as chief.
451 The Franks lend assistance to Aëtius, the Roman general, at his victory over Attila at Châlons.
458 **Childeric**, son of Merovæus, succeeds as the Salic chief.
481 **Clovis**, son of Childeric, succeeds at age of fifteen.
486 Clovis attacks the Romans under Syagirus at Soissons in northern Gaul. His great victory destroys the last vestiges of Roman power in the country, and the Salic kingdom is established. Clovis makes Soissons his capital.
493 Clovis marries Clotilda, a Christian princess.
496 Victory of Clovis over the Alamanni. Conversion of Clovis and the Franks to orthodox Christianity.
507 Clovis defeats the Visigoths at the great battle of Voulon, and kills Alaric the king. He now possesses the country from the Loire to the Pyrenees, and transfers his capital to Paris, where he occupies himself with securing his kingdom by destruction of all powerful neighbours, showing neither scruple nor pity.
511 Promulgation of the Salic law. Death of Clovis and division of the kingdom among his four sons.
(1) **Theodoric** or **Thierry I** takes the northeastern part (afterwards Austrasia), capital at Metz.
(2) **Childebert I**, the central district, capital Paris.
(3) **Clodomir**, western Gaul along the Loire, capital Orleans.
(4) **Clotaire**, the old Salic land, capital Soissons.
In spite of the division, national unity is maintained, and the Franks continue their attacks on their neighbours on all sides.
524 Death of Clodomir in battle. His brothers seize his possessions.
531 Conquest of the Thuringians.
532 Conquest of the kingdom of Burgundy.
534 Death of Theodoric. **Theudebert** succeeds at Metz.
548 **Theudebald** succeeds Theudebert at Metz.
555 Clotaire takes possession of Theudebald's kingdom.
558 On death of Childebert, Clotaire becomes sole ruler of the reunited kingdom. First application of the Salic law.
561 Death of Clotaire. The kingdom again divided.
(1) **Charibert** rules at Paris.
(2) **Gontram** at Orleans.
(3) **Sigebert** at Metz.
(4) **Chilperic** at Soissons.
567 Death of Charibert. Chilperic of Soissons seizes Charibert's kingdom. The three Frankish kingdoms now take definite form. They are known as (1) Austrasia, capital Rheims. (2) Burgundy, capital Orleans. (3) Neustria, capital Soissons. The family division leads to terrible feuds, in which Austrasia and Neustria take the principal parts. Burgundy is weak and sides first with one and then the other. The office of mayor of the palace rises to importance. The Benedictines come from Italy and help to keep culture alive.
575 Sigebert of Austrasia, at war with Chilperic, is killed by assassins hired by Chilperic's wife Fredegund. His son **Childebert II** succeeds.
584 Assassination of Chilperic of Neustria (called the "Nero and Herod of his time") probably at instigation of Fredegund. His infant son **Clotaire II** succeeds under regency of Fredegund who has had Chilperic's sons by a former wife put to death.
593 Death of Gontram of Burgundy. By his will the kingdom passes to his nephew Childebert II of Austrasia.
596 Death of Childebert II. His young sons **Theodoric** or **Thierry II** and **Theudebert II** take the crowns of Burgundy and Austrasia respectively under regency of their grandmother Brunehild. A terrible feud between Fredegund and Brunehild begins.
598 On Fredegund's death, **Brunehild** seizes almost the whole of Neustria. She aims to make the power of Austrasia secure against the nobles, who, with Arnulf bishop of Metz, and Pepin of Landen (ancestor of the Carlovingians), wages war with her.
613 In battle with the nobles and Clotaire II, Brunehild's army deserts her. She is captured and put to death by torture, also Theudebert's sons and **Sigebert II**, successor of Theodoric II. Clotaire II becomes sole king of the Franks, but the real power has now passed to the mayors of the palace, to which title the race of the Pepins have acquired an hereditary claim in Austrasia. The rest of the Merovingians are known as "les rois fainéants."
628 On death of Clotaire his son **Dagobert I** succeeds. The Merovingian power is now at its height.

638 Death of Dagobert, who divides the kingdom between his two young sons.
(1) **Clovis II** receives Burgundy and Neustria.
(2) **Sigebert III** receives Austrasia.
654 Death of Sigebert. His son Dagobert is sent to Ireland and reported dead. Clovis rules the whole Frankish kingdom.
656 Death of Clovis. His son **Clotaire III** receives Neustria and Burgundy, and another son, **Childeric II**, receives Austrasia.
670 Death of Clotaire, without issue. Childeric annexes his possessions.
673 Assassination of Childeric, his wife and son. His brother **Theodoric**, or **Thierry III**, succeeds.
674 **Dagobert II** returns from Ireland and seizes the kingdom of Austrasia.
679 Assassination of Dagobert. The struggle for the supremacy between Neustria and Austrasia is now entirely between Ebroin, mayor of the palace of Neustria, and Martin and **Pepin of Heristal** of Austrasia. The kings have lost all vestige of ruling power.
681 Assassination of Ebroin succeeded by Berthar, who is too weak to resist Pepin of Heristal.
687 Victory of Pepin of Heristal over Berthar at Textri. End of the struggle between the two Frankish powers. **Pepin of Heristal** real monarch of the Franks. He assumes title of dux and princeps Francorum.
691 Death of Thierry III. His young son **Clovis III** succeeds as nominal king.
695 Death of Clovis. His brother **Childebert (III) the Just** becomes nominal king.
711 **Dagobert III** succeeds his father as nominal king.
714 Death of Pepin of Heristal. He leaves the kingdom to his grandson under guardianship of **Plectrudis** his widow. Plectrudis imprisons Pepin's natural son Charles. A state of confusion at once arises. Neustria shakes off the yoke and Austrasia is assailed on all sides. The Austrasians release **Charles Martel** from prison and make him the ruler of the Franks.
715 Death of Dagobert. **Chilperic II**, son of Childeric II, succeeds.
717 Charles defeats the Neustrians at Vincy, and drives back the invading Saxons from the Rhine. Chilperic is deposed by Charles, and **Clotaire IV**, of obscure origin, is made king.
720 Death of Clotaire, and recall of Chilperic who dies shortly after. Charles now invests **Theodoric** or **Thierry IV**, a son of Dagobert III, with the title of royalty.
732 Battle of Tours (or Poitiers). Charles goes to the aid of Duke Eudes of Aquitania, who has been invaded by the Saracens, and drives them back to Spain.
737 On death of Thierry IV, Charles makes no attempt to appoint a new king. He continues warfare upon his foes.
741 Death of Charles Martel, leaving the power to his two sons **Pepin le Bref** and **Carloman.**
742 **Childeric (III) the Stupid**, son of Chilperic II, is allowed to assume the name and form of royalty. War with the Alamanni and other hostile peoples continued.
747 Carloman renounces his principality, the Germanic part of the kingdom (Austrasia, Swabia, and Thuringia), and becomes a Benedictine monk. Pepin le Bref sole ruler.
751 Deposition of Childeric who is placed in a monastery. Pepin is raised to title of king and confirmed by the pope.

## THE CARLOVINGIAN KINGS (751–800 A.D.)

751 **Pepin** king of the Franks. He conducts a successful campaign against the Saxons. Campaign against Aistulf of Lombardy.
755 Pepin proceeds a second time against Aistulf, who violates peace, and compels him to relinquish Ravenna, Emilia, the Pentapolis, and the duchy of Rome to the pope. This "Donation of Pepin" is the foundation of the pope's temporal power.
758 Capture of Narbonne, the Saracen capital. The Mohammedans driven out. Pepin overruns Aquitania.
768 Death of Pepin, leaving the kingdom to his two sons **Charlemagne and Carloman.**
771 Death of Carloman. Charlemagne proclaimed sole ruler. He suppresses a rising in Aquitania, and makes his son Louis king.
772 Beginning of conquest and conversion of the Saxons—a thirty years' struggle. Storming of Ehresburg. Overthrow of the idol, Irmincul, which compels the Westphalian Saxons to submit.

774 Charlemagne, who has been summoned to Italy by Pope Adrian I, whom Desiderius the Lombard king is attacking, captures Desiderius at Pavia and assumes the crown of Lombardy. The Saxons expel the Frankish garrisons and renew their ravages.
776 Charlemagne makes his son Pepin king of Italy.
777 The Saxons are apparently subdued after two campaigns. At Paderborn Charlemagne receives their homage. Large numbers of them are baptised. Charles visits Spain to receive homage.
778 On the return from Spain the rear guard under command of Roland is attacked at Roncesvalles and Roland slain. The Saxons, aided by the Danes, break out in revolt.
779 Charlemagne again subdues the Saxons, but as soon as he leaves the country they rebel.
782 Great massacre of the Saxons at Verdun.
785 The Saxons again quieted. Conversion of Wittikind, the leader, and his followers. Germany becomes Christian.
788 Bavaria incorporated in Charlemagne's dominions.
791–798 Campaigns against the Avars ending in their conquest. Pannonia added to the kingdom. The Danes, Wends, and Czechs also become subjects. The duke of Benevento is obliged to give homage. Charles' rule extends from the Eider to Sicily and from the Ebro to the Theiss. Fresh revolts among the Saxons.
799 Pope Leo III expelled from Rome seeks Charlemagne's camp at Paderborn. The king restores him to Rome.

## THE EMPIRE OF CHARLEMAGNE AND THE KINGDOM OF EAST FRANCIA (800–961 A.D.)

800 **Charlemagne** crowned emperor of the Romans by Leo on Christmas eve.
801 Harun ar-Rashid sends an embassy with presents to Charlemagne.
804 New revolts among the Saxons and Danes suppressed. The Saxons are finally conquered. Gottfried, king of Denmark, invades Frankish provinces.
808 Defeat of the Danes by Charles son of Charlemagne.
810 Charlemagne proceeds against Gottfried in person. Murder of Gottfried by his servants and peace with the Danes.
813 Charlemagne crowns his sole surviving son **Louis (I) le Débonnaire**, emperor.
814 Death of Charlemagne. Louis succeeds to the whole empire except Italy, which is in the hands of Pepin's son Bernhard.
817 Louis declares his eldest son, Lothair, his successor to the empire, giving him Austrasia and the greater part of Germany. Pepin receives Aquitania, and Ludwig Bavaria and adjacent province. Dissatisfied at this Bernhard of Italy rebels. He is captured and blinded by Louis and the kingdom given to Lothair (820).
829 Louis re-divides the empire in favour of his youngest son Charles (born 823). This dissatisfies the three other sons, and civil war breaks out.
833 Capture of Louis by his sons on the Field of Lies at Compiègne.
834 Louis released by his son Ludwig and placed again on throne.
838 Death of Pepin. Lothair and Charles divide his share of the empire, which causes Ludwig to rebel against them.
840 Death of Louis in the midst of the civil war. His son **Lothair I** succeeds to the title of emperor, and claims right to govern the whole of the empire. His brothers Ludwig and Charles combine against him.
841 Defeat of Lothair at Fontenay, leading to
843 Treaty of Verdun, dividing the empire among the brothers as follows:
(1) **Lothair I** retains imperial title. He receives Italy, and the centre of the Frankish lands — a narrow strip reaching to the North Sea, Provence, and the greater part of Burgundy.
(2) **Ludwig the German**, the eastern part of the Frankish lands between the Rhine and Elbe.
(3) **Charles the Bald**, the western lands, Neustria, Aquitania, North Burgundy, Septimania, and the Spanish March.
The history of France, distinct from Germany, begins. Lothair's territory north of Italy is called the kingdom of Lotharingia or Lorraine.
849 Lothair associates his son Louis II in the empire.
850 Lothair divides his possessions among his three sons.
(1) Louis II (emperor) receives Italy (see Italy).
(2) Lothair II receives Lorraine. He cedes Alsace to the emperor Louis II.
(3) Charles receives Provence, etc.
Death of Lothair I.

858 Ludwig the German attacks dominions of Charles the Bald, but is obliged to retreat.
863 Death of Charles of Provence. His kingdom is divided between the emperor Louis and Lothair II of Lorraine.
869 Death of Lothair. Charles the Bald seizes Lorraine and has himself crowned.
870 Treaty of Mersen between Charles the Bald and Ludwig the German. Ludwig takes the eastern half of Lothair's kingdom, and Charles the western.
875 Ludwig the German expects the imperial crown on death of Louis II. Charles the Bald obtains it, and Ludwig prepares to avenge his wrongs.
876 Death of Ludwig the German. His three sons amicably divide the kingdom.
(1) **Carloman** takes Bavaria, Bohemia, and the eastern provinces.
(2) **Ludwig** or **Louis III** takes Saxony, Franconia, Friesland, and northern Lorraine.
(3) **Charles the Fat**, the remainder.
The emperor, Charles the Bald, attempts to seize Ludwig's territory, upon which Carloman of Bavaria seizes the crown of Italy.
877 Death of Charles the Bald, and beginning of struggle between Ludwig III and Carloman for the imperial crown.
880 Death of Carloman. His natural son Arnulf claims the Bavarian crown, but being satisfied with the gift of Carinthia, it is given to Ludwig. Charles the Fat seizes Italy and
881 Is crowned emperor by Pope John VIII.
882 Death of Ludwig without issue. The entire dominion of Germany becomes vested in Charles the Fat.
884 Charles becomes king of France (see France). The entire empire of Charlemagne (with the exception of Arles) is once more united under one ruler, but he proves utterly unfit for his charge and
887 After the disgraceful treaty with the Northmen (see France) he is deposed at Tribur and dies almost immediately afterward.
East Francia (afterwards Germany), West Francia (France), and Italy are once more divided. The East Franks or Germans elect **Arnulf of Carinthia**, illegitimate son of Carloman of Bavaria, as their king.
891 Arnulf defeats the Northmen at Loewen.
893 He allies himself with the Magyars or Hungarians, a Finnish tribe that has made its way into Hungary from the Ural region, for a campaign against the king of Moravia. He is only partially successful, and opens a way for the Magyar invasion of western Europe.
895 Arnulf seizes the West Frankish province of Lorraine and makes it into a kingdom for his natural son Zwentibold.
896 Arnulf invades Italy in the interests of the exiled king Berengar I. He defeats the emperor Lambert and restores Berengar. The pope crowns him emperor, which title he holds without dispute on death of Lambert (898).
899 Death of Arnulf. His six-year-old son **Ludwig (IV) the Child** becomes king of East Francia (Germany). He is under the influence of Hatto, archbishop of Mainz.
900 Revolt of the subjects of Zwentibold. He is killed by the rebels, and Lorraine passes to Ludwig.
908 The Magyar invasion begins to assume serious proportions.
910 Ludwig defeated by the Magyars on the Lech.
911 Death of Ludwig — the last Carlovingian prince in Germany. The feudal system has now become firmly established in Germany and the royal power is but a shadow of that exercised by the early Carlovingians. The crown is refused by Otto the Illustrious of Saxony and **Conrad I** duke of Franconia is elected king.
911–918 The Danes, Slavs, and Magyars continue their invasion. The duke of Lotharingia or Lorraine transfers his allegiance to the king of France. Conrad sends armies to France but is unable to prevent the loss of Lorraine. He struggles against the rising power of the dukes, especially with that of Henry of Saxony — a quarrel forced by the clergy. Conrad repents of this and on his death-bed advises election of Henry as his successor.
918 On death of Conrad **Henry (I) the Fowler** is elected king of East Francia. The Saxon line begins and the German monarchy is founded. Henry is a wise and great ruler. In the first year of his reign he obtains acknowledgment of his supremacy from the refractory dukes of Swabia and Bavaria.
924 Henry makes a nine years' truce with the still troublesome Magyars, and pays them yearly tribute.
925 Lorraine is again added to Germany to which it belongs for the next eight centuries.
929 Victory at Lenzen over Wends and Danes.
933 On expiration of truce, Henry refuses further tribute to the Magyars. They make a fresh inroad but are totally defeated by Henry in Thuringia.

936 Henry prepares to go to Rome to claim the imperial crown won by no German since Arnulf. He dies before he can get started. His son by Matilda, **Otto (I) the Great**, is elected to succeed him.
937 An attempted Magyar invasion is repelled, and the invaders turn off into France.
938 Otto quells rebellion of the dukes of Bavaria and Franconia and his own half brother Thankmar, who falls at the battle on the Eresburg.
939 Rebellion of Otto's brother Henry aided by the duke of Lorraine. They are defeated at Birten, and call on French for help.
941 Henry, forgiven, becomes a firm ally of Otto, and is made duke of Bavaria (946).
944 Otto makes Conrad the Red, duke of Lorraine.
948 Otto appoints his son, Ludolf, duke of Swabia.
946–950 Otto interferes in the civil wars of France.
950 Successful war with the Wends. Submission of the duke of Bohemia.
951 First expedition of Otto into Italy to avenge wrongs of Adelheid. Marriage of Otto and Adelheid. Berengar II submits to Otto.
953 Rebellion of Ludolf and Conrad.
954 First invasion of the Magyars, joined by the rebels. Ludolf and Conrad submit but are deprived of their duchies. Subjection of Bavaria by Henry.
955 Great victory over the Hungarians on the Lechfeld. They do not again invade Germany. Otto conducts a victorious expedition against the Wends. The Bavarian Ostmark (afterwards duchy of Austria) re-established.
961 The pope appeals to Otto for help against Berengar II. Otto goes to Italy and deposes Berengar and Adalbert. Otto's son Otto II crowned king of Germany.
962 Otto crowned emperor by John XII. Union of the German kingdom and the empire.

## THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

### THE SAXON EMPERORS (962–1024 A.D.)

Otto discards title of *Rex Francorum Orientalium* for that of *Imperator Augustus*. The pope realises that Otto will be a hard master and allies himself with the deposed Adalbert.
963 Otto captures Rome and deposes John XII. Leo VIII is elected in his place.
964 The Romans rebel and replace John. Berengar compelled to surrender in an attempt to recover Italy. Death of John and election of Benedict V. Otto takes Rome a second time and restores Leo VIII. He returns to Germany carrying Benedict with him.
967 Otto avenges the deposition of Leo's successor, John XIII, by great cruelty to the Romans. Otto summons Otto II to Rome, where John XIII gives him the imperial crown. Two great maxims of the empire are established.
(1) The election of the pope to be invalid without consent of emperor.
(2) The German king to be king of Italy and Rome, though not to assume imperial title until crowned by the pope.
968 Invasion of the Greek provinces by Otto on account of difficulties over the marriage arrangements of Otto II and Theophano, daughter of the Byzantine emperor. The matter is pacifically arranged on accession of Joannes Zimisces.
973 Death of Otto I. **Otto II** sole possessor of the royal and imperial titles.
976 Conspiracy of Otto's cousin, Henry the Wrangler, of Bavaria, who has caused himself to be crowned at Ratisbon. He is defeated and deposed.
977 War with France over Lorraine. Narrow escape of Otto at Aachen.
980 Peace with France. Otto holds Lorraine as a benefice of France.
981 Otto goes to Rome to settle internecine quarrels.
982 Otto invades southern Italy in an attempt to conquer the Byzantine provinces. After a victory he encounters defeat by the Greeks and their Saracen allies in Calabria.
983 The Danes and Wends successfully invade the northern provinces. Death of Otto. His three-year-old son **Otto III** succeeds as king of Germany and Italy. Theophano conducts regency in Germany, and Adelheid in Italy.
991 Death of Theophano. Adelheid and Willigis, archbishop of Cologne, assume regency in Germany.
995 Otto takes up conduct of affairs.
996 Otto summoned to Rome on account of difficulties between the Pope and Crescentius, the Roman consul. Coronation of Otto as emperor by Gregory V. Crescentius swears obedience to Otto, but breaks his oath.

998 Otto comes a second time to Rome and puts Crescentius to death.
999 Otto and Pope Silvester II plan for a great union of the Eastern and Western Empires under Otto.
1000 A widespread belief that the world will end this year brings great troops of pilgrims to Rome. Poland acknowledges the supremacy of the emperor.
1001 Revolt of the Romans.
1002 Death of Otto. The nobles and bishops of Italy at once choose **Arduin**, marquis of Ivrea, king of Italy. He is crowned at Pavia. The Germans, after a bitter contest, elect **Henry II**, son of Henry the Wrangler, king of Germany.
1004 Henry, having pacified Germany, marches against the unpopular Arduin, is proclaimed king of Italy and crowned. The Germans burn Pavia. War with Poland compels Henry to return to Germany without reducing Arduin.
Boleslaw, duke of Poland, has seized Bohemia, and Henry compels him to give it up, but Boleslaw continues to wage war for some years. War with Flanders. Baldwin reduced to submission, but he obtains the country of Valenciennes and a large part of Zeeland.
1014 Henry proceeds a second time against Arduin, who gives up resistance and retires to a monastery. Coronation of Henry as emperor at Rome.
1015 The Normans settle in southern Italy.
1016 Rudolf III of Burgundy surrenders his crown to Henry, holding the kingdom until his death.
1018 Peace made with Poland.
1021 Henry proceeds against the Byzantines in southern Italy. The newly arrived Normans assist him. Capua and Salerno are reduced, but the plague compels him to withdraw (1022). Henry exhorts the Lombards and Normans to expel the Greeks.
1024 Death of Henry without issue.

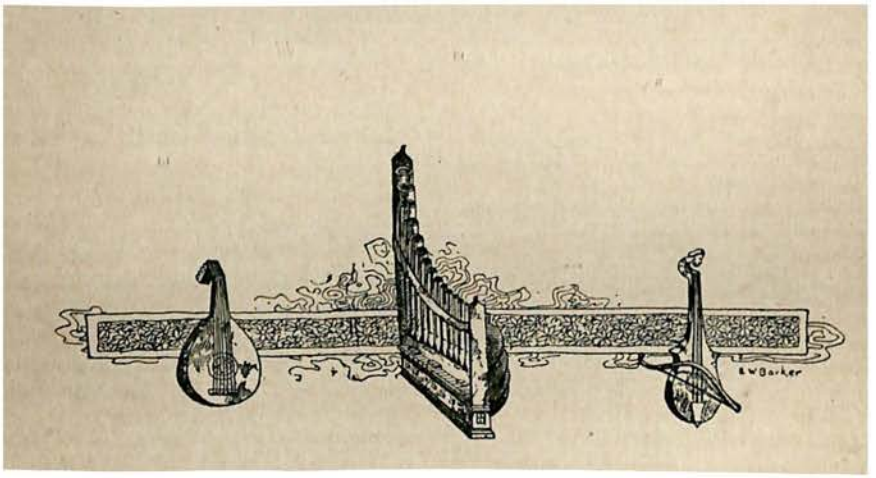
## THE FRANCONIAN OR SALIAN EMPERORS (1024–1137 A.D.)

1024 Election of **Conrad II** of Carinthia to the kingship of Germany. Insurrection in Pavia. The crown of Italy offered to various French nobles, but they refuse it.
1025 Revolt of Duke Ernst of Swabia.
1026 Conrad proceeds to Italy. Crowned king of Italy at Milan. Pavia and Ravenna reduced to submission by force.
1027 Coronation of Conrad as emperor. Schleswig abandoned to the Danes.
1030 Disastrous invasion of the Poles. Ten thousand Germans carried to Poland.
1031 Conrad forces Poles to restore captives and reunites Lusatia to the empire.
1033 Conrad unites Burgundy to the empire after a struggle with a claimant, Count Eudes of Champagne.
1035 Civil war in Lombardy brings Conrad to Italy.
1037 Promulgation of the feudal edict of Conrad. Fruitless siege of Milan. Conrad withdraws on account of pestilence.
1039 Death of Conrad. His son **Henry III**, already crowned king of Germany (1026), succeeds. Height of the imperial power. Civil war in Italy continues.
1041 Campaign against Bretislaw of Bohemia, who offers his country as a fief of the crown.
1042–1044 Campaign against Hungary where German supremacy is first asserted. King Peter becomes a vassal of the empire.
1044 Fall of Milan before Henry.
1046 At council of Sutri Henry deposes the three rival popes, and puts Clement II in the holy see. He also nominates the three succeeding popes.
1047 Clement crowns Henry emperor. Henry goes to southern Italy and invests the Normans with the territories they have conquered. He afterwards repents of this generosity, and helps Leo IX against the encroaching strangers.
1049 After a long struggle with Gottfried of Lorraine the duchy is given to Gerhard, the ancestor of the modern house of Lorraine.
1052 Henry gives up a contest with the great dukes, who fear he is attempting to bring the duchies under his direct authority. He besieges Pressburg for ten months, but suddenly abandons it.
1055 Henry returns to Italy to contend with the powerful duke of Tuscany.
1056 Death of Henry. His son **Henry IV**, six years old, succeeds. He has been crowned king two years before. The empress Agnes is the regent, but she is carefully watched by Henry, archbishop of Augsburg. Rebellion of Otto of Thuringia, against the young king, put down.

1062 Hanno, archbishop of Cologne, abducts the king from the custody of the archbishop of Augsburg. The influence of Agnes ends. Hanno finds a powerful rival in Adalbert, archbishop of Bremen, who controls the supreme power in 1065.
1066 Henry assumes the government. Hanno contrives the banishment of Adalbert.
1069 Recall of Adalbert. Restored to power he influences the Saxons against Henry.
1072 Death of Adalbert, and revolt of the Saxons.
1073 The Saxons cause Henry to flee from the Harzburg. Humiliating peace.
1075 Henry defeats the Saxons on the Unstrut. He dictates his own terms of peace. Henry appeals to Pope Gregory VII to degrade the prelate, who sided with the rebellious Saxons. Gregory responds by calling on the king to answer certain charges brought against him by his subjects. The pope issues a bull against lay investiture.
1076 Henry calls a council at Worms and declares the pope deposed. Gregory excommunicates the king, who is suspended from his royal office by the Diet of Tribur. Beginning of the war of the investitures — ecclesiastical against the civil power.
1077 Deserted by many adherents, Henry humbles himself before the pope at Canossa. The Germans elect **Rudolf of Swabia** king.
1080 After a victory of Rudolf, Gregory recognises him as king. Henry calls a council of the clergy faithful to him. It declares Gregory deposed and elects Clement III. Rudolf slain in battle. Defeat of the army raised by Countess Matilda. Second excommunication of Henry. He at once lays siege to Rome.
1084 Henry takes possession. Gregory shuts himself up in the castle of St. Angelo. Coronation of Henry by the anti-pope Clement III. Robert Guiscard releases Gregory, who dies the following year, at Salerno.
1085 Defeat of Henry by **Hermann of Luxemburg**, who has been elected to succeed Rudolf of Swabia.
1087 Resignation of Hermann. **Eckbert of Meissen** elected to succeed him.
1089 Death of Eckbert. The rebellious faction comes to terms with Henry.
1090 Henry goes to Rome to support the anti-pope Clement III. Mantua captured, but in general he is unsuccessful.
1092 Revolt of Henry's eldest son Conrad, who has been anointed king of Germany in 1087. Conrad is crowned king of Italy, and promised the imperial crown by the pope on condition that he yield on the great question of investitures.
1096 Henry returns to Germany.
1097 The first band of crusaders crosses Germany.
1099 The Germans declare Conrad deposed as king and elect his brother Henry.
1101 Death of Conrad.
1105 Henry's son Henry, abetted by Pope Paschal II, rebels against him. The emperor flees to Liège.
1106 Death of Henry IV. **Henry V** succeeds.
1107 Milan makes herself into a republic.
1110 Assured of the support of the German princes, Henry goes to Rome to settle the question of investitures. The Treaty of Sutri, compromising the rights of the church.
1111 The pope refuses to crown Henry on account of this Treaty of Sutri, and Henry imprisons the pope and cardinals. The pope is compelled to bestow the imperial crown.
1112 When Henry leaves, the Lateran council declares the concessions of Sutri invalid and the emperor excommunicated.
1114 Rebellion in Germany headed by Lothair of Saxony and the archbishops of Mainz and of Cologne.
1115 Victory of the rebels near Mansfeld. Contest with the pope over the division of the countess Matilda's estate.
1116 Henry visits Rome, and causes himself to be recrowned in the absence of Paschal.
1119 Excommunication of Henry and his anti-pope Gregory by Pope Calixtus II.
1122 War of the investitures settled by the Concordat of Worms. It is a compromise, but the papacy remains master of the field. Absolution of Henry.
1125 Henry prepares to attack Rheims, but dies at Nimeguen. **Lothair II of Saxony** elected to succeed him.
1127 War between Frederick of Swabia and Conrad of Franconia, nephews of Henry V. Frederick soon yields his claims in favour of Conrad and the latter enters Lombardy.
1128 Coronation of Conrad as king of Italy.
1130 Alliance of the anti-pope Anacletus and Roger II of Sicily against Lothair.
1132 Lothair goes to Italy against the alliance and Conrad. The latter retires.

1133 Coronation of Lothair as emperor by Innocent II. He receives the allodial possessions of Matilda as a fief from the pope.
1134 Albrecht the Bear conquers Brandenburg.
1135 Conrad and Frederick submit to the emperor.
1137 Siege of Salerno in campaign of Lothair and Innocent II against Roger. Roger driven from Italy. Death of Lothair on his way back to Germany. By this time the supreme power in Germany has been gradually transferred from the emperor to the diet, and the fiefs have been converted into hereditary dominions. End of the Franconian Dynasty.

We interrupt the story of the "Western Empire" or "Holy Roman Empire" at this point partly as a matter of convenience, partly because the empire has ceased to be Roman in any traditional sense of the word. In so far as it remains an empire, it has become essentially German. There is little unity of interest between the northern and the southern domains. Later emperors sometimes fail to come to Italy at all; sometimes come as invaders and conquerors rather than as recognised sovereigns. For a long time the German domains are by no means securely unified, and the Italian states are utterly inharmonious. The story of internecine strife in each of these domains, leading finally, after centuries of contention, to the development of the Italian kingdom and the Austrian and German empires of our own day, will be told in later volumes.



# CHAPTER I

## ODOACER TO THE TRIUMPH OF NARSES

[476–568 A.D.]

IT is urged by some authors, by Bury[b] among others, that the phrase "Fall of the Western Empire" is unfortunate; that the "year of 476" was comparatively trivial, marking no really great era in the history of the world; that no empire fell in 476, there being no Western Empire to fall. Doubtless there is a certain measure of truth in this view. But, on the other hand, posterity cannot avoid erecting significant dates as milestones in the pathway of history, and the historians of the future will doubtless continue to follow precedent by regarding the fall of Rome in 476 as at least a convenient date from which to reckon the advent of a new era. But in so doing we may freely admit with Bury that until the year of his death in 480 Julius Nepos was still emperor in the West, acknowledged as such by Zeno, and that theoretically the Roman Empire was as it had been in the days of Theodosius the Great or in the days of Julian. There is really no great difference of opinion as to the precise facts of the case; there is only difference of interpretation.

Bury thinks that "when the Count Marcellinus[c] in his *Chronicle* wrote that on the death of Aëtius 'the Hesperian realm fell' he could justify his statement better than those who place 476 among the critical dates of the world's history." He contends that it is far more profitable to gain a clear conception of the continuity of history than to divide it into imaginary epochs; better to understand that Merobaudes was succeeded by Odovacar[1] than to puzzle about the alleged fall of an empire. Be that as it may, it is this Odovacar, or as we shall call him Odoacer, whose deeds now claim our attention. We have already made acquaintance with this famous barbarian in an earlier volume, where the events that led up to the fall of Rome are recorded; we must now

[1] [Bury[b] uses this spelling, as do most of the German writers, while Hodgkin[c] prefers to retain "the *Odovakar* of the contemporary authorities in all its primeval ruggedness, instead of softening it down with later historians (chiefly the Byzantine annalists) into the smooth and unctuous *Odoacer*." In this work, however, the more familiar form sanctified by long usage is continued.]

follow the interesting story of his deeds in greater detail. But first it will be well to inquire into the antecedents of so important a personage as the first barbarian ruler of Rome.

Naturally enough the early years of Odoacer are involved in some obscurity. He appears to have been born about the year 434 A.D. in the district bordering on the Middle Danube. Four Germanic tribes seem to have claimed him as belonging to them by birth; and whilst it is impossible to learn the exact truth in the matter, the student of heredity will perhaps find in the legends another evidence for the value of racial mixture in the development of men of genius. An additional item of similar moment is found in the fact that the father of Odoacer bore a name variously written "Ædico" and "Idico," suggestive of Edecon the Hun, known to history as the betrayer of his master Attila. We are not certain as to when Odoacer left his country and entered the imperial service; but he had risen to some eminence by the year 472, and four years later had attained such predominance over his fellows that they were induced to proclaim him king; they did so on the 23rd of August 476. Soon Augustulus was dethroned and Rome accepted the new ruler.

"The highest praise that can be bestowed on the government of this adventurer from the Danubian lands," says Hodgkin, "is that we hear so little about it." Even the eviction of the Romans from one-third of the lands of Italy is regarded by Hodgkin as probably affecting large proprietors chiefly, and hence as involving comparatively little hardship, though of course not carried out altogether without violence. Doubtless the proprietors themselves would have felt this to be a very mild way of stating their case. We are justified, however, in believing that the usurpation was effected with as little violence as the circumstances permitted. Nor is there reason to suppose that a very strenuous resistance was made.[a]

Thus Odoacer was the first barbarian to reign in Italy over a people who had once asserted their just superiority above the rest of mankind. The disgrace of the Romans still excites our respectful compassion, and we fondly sympathise with the imaginary grief and indignation of their degenerate posterity. But the calamities of Italy had gradually subdued the proud consciousness of freedom and glory. In the age of Roman virtue, the provinces were subject to the arms, and the citizens to the laws, of the republic; till those laws were subverted by civil discord, and both the city and the provinces became the servile property of a tyrant. The forms of the constitution, which alleviated or disguised their abject slavery, were abolished by time and violence; the Italians alternately lamented the presence or the absence of the sovereigns whom they detested or despised; and the succession of five centuries inflicted the various evils of military license, capricious despotism, and elaborate oppression.

During the same period, the barbarians had emerged from obscurity and contempt, and the warriors of Germany and Scythia were introduced into the provinces, as the servants, the allies, and at length the masters, of the Romans, whom they insulted or protected. The hatred of the people was suppressed by fear; they respected the spirit and splendour of the martial chiefs who were invested with the honours of the empire; and the fate of Rome had long depended on the sword of those formidable strangers. The stern Ricimer, who trampled on the ruins of Italy, had exercised the power, without assuming the title, of a king; and the patient Romans were insensibly prepared to acknowledge the royalty of Odoacer and his barbaric successors.

The king of Italy was not unworthy of the high station to which his valour and fortune had exalted him; his savage manners were polished by

[476-489 A.D.]

the habits of conversation; and he respected, though a conqueror and a barbarian, the institutions, and even the prejudices, of his subjects. After an interval of seven years, Odoacer restored the consulship of the West. For himself, he modestly, or proudly, declined an honour which was still accepted by the emperors of the East; but the curule chair was successively filled by eleven of the most illustrious senators; and the list is adorned by the respectable name of Basilius, whose virtues claimed the friendship and grateful applause of Sidonius, his client.

The laws of the emperors were strictly enforced, and the civil administration of Italy was still exercised by the prætorian prefect and his subordinate officers. Odoacer devolved on the Roman magistrates the odious and oppressive task of collecting the public revenue; but he reserved for himself the merit of seasonable and popular indulgence. Like the rest of the barbarians, he had been instructed in the Arian heresy; but he revered the monastic and episcopal characters; and the silence of the Catholics attests the toleration which they enjoyed. The peace of the city required the interposition of his prefect Basilius in the choice of a Roman pontiff; the decree which restrained the clergy from alienating their lands was ultimately designed for the benefit of the people, whose devotion would have been taxed to repair the dilapidations of the church.

Italy was protected by the arms of its conqueror; and its frontiers were respected by the barbarians of Gaul and Germany, who had so long insulted the feeble race of Theodosius. Odoacer passed the Adriatic, to chastise the assassins of the emperor Nepos, and to acquire the maritime province of Dalmatia. He passed the Alps, to rescue the remains of Noricum from Fava, or Feletheus, king of the Rugians, who held his residence beyond the Danube. The king was vanquished in battle, and led away prisoner; a numerous colony of captives and subjects was transplanted into Italy; and Rome, after a long period of defeat and disgrace, might claim the triumph of her barbarian master.

Notwithstanding the prudence and success of Odoacer, his kingdom exhibited the sad prospect of misery and desolation. Since the age of Tiberius, the decay of agriculture had been felt in Italy; and it was a just subject of complaint that the life of the Roman people depended on the accidents of the winds and waves. In the division and the decline of the empire, the tributary harvests of Egypt and Africa were withdrawn; the numbers of the inhabitants continually diminished with the means of subsistence; and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, famine, and pestilence. St. Ambrose has deplored the ruin of a populous district, which had been once adorned with the flourishing cities of Bononia (Bologna), Mutina (Modena), Regium (Reggio), and Placentia (Piacenza).

Pope Gelasius was a subject of Odoacer, and he affirms, with strong exaggeration, that in Æmilia, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, the human species was almost extirpated. The plebeians of Rome, who were fed by the hand of their master, perished or disappeared, as soon as his liberality was suppressed; the decline of the arts reduced the industrious mechanic to idleness and want; and the senators, who might support with patience the ruin of their country, bewailed their private loss of wealth and luxury. One-third of those ample estates, to which the ruin of Italy is originally imputed, was extorted for the use of the conquerors. Injuries were aggravated by insults; the sense of actual sufferings was embittered by the fear of more dreadful evils; and as new lands were allotted to new swarms of barbarians,

each senator was apprehensive lest the arbitrary surveyors should approach his favourite villa, or his most profitable farm. The least unfortunate were those who submitted without a murmur to the power which it was impossible to resist. Since they desired to live, they owed some gratitude to the tyrant who had spared their lives; and since he was the absolute master of their fortunes, the portion which he left must be accepted as his pure and voluntary gift.

The distress of Italy was mitigated by the prudence and humanity of Odoacer, who had bound himself, as the price of his elevation, to satisfy the demands of a licentious and turbulent multitude. The kings of the barbarians were frequently resisted, deposed, or murdered, by their native subjects; and the various bands of Italian mercenaries, who associated under the standard of an elective general, claimed a larger privilege of freedom and rapine. A monarchy destitute of national union, and hereditary right, hastened to its dissolution. After a reign of fourteen years, Odoacer was oppressed by the superior genius of Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, a hero alike excellent in the arts of war and of government, who restored an age of peace and prosperity, and whose name still excites and deserves the attention of mankind.

## THE RISE OF THEODORIC

After the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, an interval of fifty years, till the memorable reign of Justinian, is faintly marked by the obscure names and imperfect annals of Zeno, Anastasius, and Justin, who successively ascended the throne of Constantinople. During the same period, Italy revived and flourished under the government of a Gothic king, who might have deserved a statue among the best and bravest of the ancient Romans.

Theodoric the Ostrogoth, the fourteenth in lineal descent of the royal line of the Amali, was born in the neighbourhood of Vienna, two years after the death of Attila.[1] A recent victory had restored the independence of the Ostrogoths; and the three brothers, Walamir, Theodemir, and Widimir, who ruled that warlike nation with united counsels, had separately pitched their habitations in the fertile though desolate province of Pannonia. The Huns still threatened their revolted subjects, but their hasty attack was repelled by the single forces of Walamir, and the news of his victory reached the distant camp of his brother in the same auspicious moment that the favourite concubine of Theodemir was delivered of a son and heir. In the eighth year of his age, Theodoric was reluctantly yielded by his father to the public interest, as the pledge of an alliance which Leo, emperor of the East, had consented to purchase by an annual subsidy of three hundred pounds of gold. The royal hostage was educated at Constantinople with care and tenderness. His body was formed to all the exercises of war, his mind was expanded by the habits of liberal conversation; he frequented the schools of the most skilful masters; but he disdained or neglected the arts of Greece, and so ignorant did he always remain of the first elements of science, that a rude mark was contrived to represent the signature of the illiterate king of Italy.

As soon as he had attained the age of eighteen, he was restored to the wishes of the Ostrogoths, whom the emperor aspired to gain by liberality and confidence. Walamir had fallen in battle: the youngest of the brothers,

[1] So Gibbon,[a] but Hodgkin,[c] who puts the birth of Theodoric in 454, places the death of Attila a year before, while Bury[b] makes it the same year.

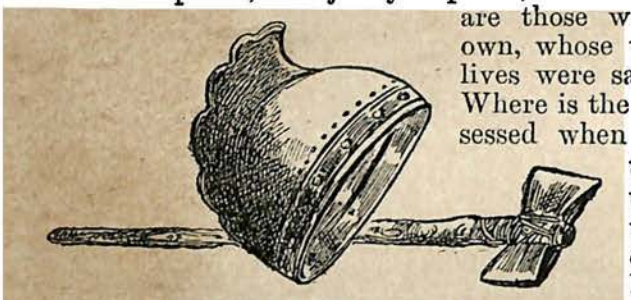
[473–476 A.D.]

Widimir, had led away into Italy and Gaul an army of barbarians, and the whole nation acknowledged for their king the father of Theodoric. His ferocious subjects admired the strength and stature of their young prince; and he soon convinced them that he had not degenerated from the valour of his ancestors. At the head of six thousand volunteers, he secretly left the camp in quest of adventures, descended the Danube as far as Singidunum or Belgrade, and soon returned to his father with the spoils of a Sarmatian king whom he had vanquished and slain. Such triumphs, however, were productive only of fame, and the invincible Ostrogoths were reduced to extreme distress by the want of clothing and food. They unanimously resolved to desert their Pannonian encampments, and boldly to advance into the warm and wealthy neighbourhood of the Byzantine court, which already maintained in pride and luxury so many bands of confederate Goths. After proving by some acts of hostility that they could be dangerous, or at least troublesome enemies, the Ostrogoths sold at a high price their reconciliation and fidelity, accepted a donative of lands and money, and were entrusted with the defence of the lower Danube, under the command of Theodoric, who succeeded after his father's death to the hereditary throne of the Amali.

Whatever fear or affection could bestow was profusely lavished by Zeno on the king of the Ostrogoths; the rank of patrician and consul, the command of the Palatine troops, an equestrian statue, a treasure in gold and silver of many thousand pounds, the name of son, and the promise of a rich and honourable wife. As long as Theodoric condescended to serve, he supported with courage and fidelity the cause of his benefactor: his rapid march contributed to the restoration of Zeno; and in the second revolt, the Walamirs, as they were called, pursued and pressed the Asiatic rebels, till they left an easy victory to the imperial troops. But the faithful servant was suddenly converted into a formidable enemy, who spread the flames of war from Constantinople to the Adriatic; many flourishing cities were reduced to ashes, and the agriculture of Thrace was almost extirpated by the wanton cruelty of the Goths, who deprived their captive peasants of the right hand that guided the plough. On such occasions, Theodoric sustained the loud and specious reproach of disloyalty, of ingratitude, and of insatiate avarice, which could be only excused by the hard necessity of his situation. He reigned, not as the monarch but as the minister of a ferocious people, whose spirit was unbroken by slavery, and impatient of real or imaginary insults. Their poverty was incurable; since the most liberal donatives were soon dissipated in wasteful luxury, and the most fertile estates became barren in their hands; they despised, but they envied, the laborious provincials; and when their subsistence had failed, the Ostrogoths embraced the familiar resources of war and rapine.

It had been the wish of Theodoric (such at least was his declaration) to lead a peaceful, obscure, obedient life, on the confines of Scythia, till the Byzantine court, by splendid and fallacious promises, seduced him to attack a confederate tribe of Goths, who had been engaged in the party of Basiliscus. He marched from his station in Mœsia, on the solemn assurance that before he reached Hadrianopolis, he should meet a plentiful convoy of provisions, and a reinforcement of eight thousand horse and thirty thousand foot, while the legions of Asia were encamped at Heraclea to second his operations. These measures were disappointed by mutual jealousy. As he advanced into Thrace the son of Theodemir found an inhospitable solitude, and his Gothic followers, with a heavy train of horses, of mules, and of wagons, were betrayed by their guides among the rocks and precipices of

Mount Sondis, where he was assaulted by the arms and invectives of Theodoric the son of Triarius. From a neighbouring height, his artful rival harangued the camp of the Walamirs, and branded their leader with the opprobrious names of child, of madman, of perjured traitor, the enemy of his blood and nation. "Are you ignorant," exclaimed the son of Triarius, "that it is the constant policy of the Romans to destroy the Goths by each other's swords? Are you insensible that the victor in this unnatural contest will be exposed, and justly exposed, to their implacable revenge? Where are those warriors, my kinsmen, and thy own, whose widows now lament that their lives were sacrificed to thy rash ambition? Where is the wealth which thy soldiers possessed when they were first allured from their native homes to enlist under thy standard? Each of them was then master of three or four horses; they now follow thee on foot like slaves, through the deserts of Thrace; those men who were tempted by the hope of measuring gold with a bushel, those brave men who are as free and as noble as thyself."[1] A language so well suited to the temper of the Goths, excited clamour and discontent; and the son of Theodemir, apprehensive of being left alone, was compelled to embrace his brethren, and to imitate the example of Roman perfidy.



EARLY GOTHIC HELMET AND AXE

In every state of his fortune, the prudence and firmness of Theodoric were equally conspicuous; whether he threatened Constantinople at the head of the confederate Goths, or retreated with a faithful band to the mountains and sea coast of Epirus. At length the accidental death of the son of Triarius[2] destroyed the balance which the Romans had been so anxious to preserve; the whole nation acknowledged the supremacy of the Amali, and the Byzantine court subscribed an ignominious and oppressive treaty. The senate had already declared, that it was necessary to choose a party among the Goths, since the public was unequal to the support of their united forces; a subsidy of two thousand pounds of gold, with the ample pay of thirteen thousand men, were required for the least considerable of their armies; and the Isaurians, who guarded not the empire but the emperor, enjoyed, besides the privilege of rapine, an annual pension of five thousand pounds.

The sagacious mind of Theodoric soon perceived that he was odious to the Romans, and suspected by the barbarians; he understood the popular murmur, that his subjects were exposed in their frozen huts to intolerable hardships, while their king was dissolved in the luxury of Greece; and he prevented the painful alternative of encountering the Goths, as the champion, or of leading them to the field as the enemy, of Zeno. Embracing an enterprise worthy of his courage and ambition, Theodoric addressed the emperor in the following words: "Although your servant is maintained in affluence by your liberality, graciously listen to the wishes of my heart! Italy, the inheritance of your predecessors, and Rome itself, the head and mistress of the world, now fluctuate under the violence and oppression of

[1] These curious details are included in the account of Malchus.*f*]

[2] This man who shared the great Theodoric's name, and threatened his power, while riding an unruly horse was borne against a spear hanging before his tent door. The wound proved fatal, according to Evagrius,*g* who tells the story.]

[488–489 A.D.]

Odoacer the mercenary. Direct me, with my national troops, to march against the tyrant. If I fall, you will be relieved from an expensive and troublesome friend; if, with the divine permission, I succeed, I shall govern in your name, and to your glory, the Roman senate, and the part of the republic delivered from slavery by my victorious arms." The proposal of Theodoric was accepted, and perhaps had been suggested, by the Byzantine court. But the forms of the commission, or grant, appear to have been expressed with a prudent ambiguity, which might be explained by the event; and it was left doubtful whether the conqueror of Italy should reign as the lieutenant, the vassal, or the ally, of the emperor of the East.[d]

Theodoric's speech, quoted above, is given by Jordanes,[h] who is believed to be quoting from Cassiodorus,[i] the friend and minister of Theodoric. Procopius,[j] however, says that Zeno, being skilful in temporary expedients, "advised Theodoric to march to Italy, and, by a contest with Odoacer, win the Western Empire for himself and his Goths. He showed him that it was better for him to rule over the Italians than to fight the emperor at so much hazard." The anonymous *Valesian Fragment*[k] is even more definite as to Zeno's share in the idea; it says that Zeno "sent him to Italy," and offered him "as a reward for his pains," that "until Zeno himself arrived" he might consider himself ruler.

HODGKIN[c] thinks that the rights of the contracting parties were purposely left in uncertainty, and he regards this suggestive ambiguity as being far more important than any question of mere priority of invention between Zeno and Theodoric. Why, he inquires, did the Goth ask the emperor's leave to invade Italy if that territory was regarded as lost to the empire in the sense that Dacia and Britain were lost? The Goth declared that he would hold Italy as his adopted father's gift; but just what were the responsibilities of present possession or of future disposal of the crown that this acknowledgment implied? Hodgkin's answer to these questions, however, is not very satisfactory. He thinks it clear that Theodoric went on this hazardous expedition with imperial approval, and that tacitly at least the fact was recognised that "Italy and Rome still formed part of the Respublica Romana;" but he appears to feel that everything would depend upon the arbitrament of arms, regardless of shadowy claims based on earlier imperial conditions. Leaving, then, both the question of priority and the equally unsolvable riddle as to the political implication of title, we must now follow the fortunes of Theodoric and Odoacer to the battlefield, where a practical solution is to be found for the dispute over the ownership of Italy.[a]

### THE GOTHS MOVE UPON ITALY

The reputation both of the leader and of the war, diffused a universal ardour; the Walamirs were multiplied by the Gothic swarms already engaged in the service, or seated in the provinces, of the empire; and each bold barbarian, who had heard of the wealth and beauty of Italy, was impatient to seek, through the most perilous adventures, the possession of such enchanting objects. The march of Theodoric must be considered as the emigration of an entire people; the wives and children of the Goths, their aged parents, and most precious effects, were carefully transported; and some idea may be formed of the heavy baggage that now followed the camp, by the loss of two thousand wagons, which had been sustained in a single action in the war of Epirus. For their subsistence, the Goths depended on the magazines

of corn which was ground in portable mills by the hands of their women; on the milk and flesh of their flocks and herds; on the casual produce of the chase, and upon the contributions which they might impose on all who should presume to dispute the passage, or to refuse their friendly assistance. Notwithstanding these precautions, they were exposed to the danger, and almost to the distress, of famine, in a march of seven hundred miles, which had been undertaken in the depth of a rigorous winter.

Since the fall of the Roman power, Dacia and Pannonia no longer exhibited the rich prospect of populous cities, well-cultivated fields, and convenient highways: the reign of barbarism and desolation was restored, and the tribes of Bulgarians, Gepids, and Sarmatians, who had occupied the vacant province, were prompted by their native fierceness, or the solicitations of Odoacer, to resist the progress of his enemy. In many obscure, though bloody battles, Theodoric fought and vanquished; till at length, surmounting every obstacle by skilful conduct and persevering courage, he descended from the Julian Alps, and displayed his invincible banners on the confines of Italy (489).

Odoacer, a rival not unworthy of his arms, had already occupied the advantageous and well-known post of the river Sontius near the ruins of Aquileia, at the head of a powerful host, whose independent kings or leaders disdained the duties of subordination and the prudence of delays. No sooner had Theodoric granted a short repose and refreshment to his wearied cavalry, than he boldly attacked the fortifications of the enemy; the Ostrogoths showed more ardour to acquire, than the mercenaries to defend, the lands of Italy; and the reward of the first victory was the possession of the Venetian province as far as the walls of Verona. In the neighbourhood of that city, on the steep banks of the rapid Adige, he was opposed by a new army, reinforced in its numbers, and not impaired in its courage; the contest was more obstinate, but the event was still more decisive; Odoacer fled to Ravenna, Theodoric advanced to Mediolanum, and the vanquished troops saluted their conqueror with loud acclamations of respect and fidelity. But their want either of constancy or of faith, soon exposed him to the most imminent danger; his vanguard, with several Gothic counts, which had been rashly entrusted to a deserter,[1] was betrayed and destroyed near Faventia (Faenza) by his double treachery; Odoacer again appeared master of the field, and the invader, strongly entrenched in his camp of Ticinum, was reduced to solicit the aid of a kindred nation, the Visigoths of Gaul.

In the course of this history, the most voracious appetite for war will be abundantly satiated; nor can we much lament that our dark and imperfect materials do not afford a more ample narrative of the distress of Italy, and of the fierce conflict, which was finally decided by the abilities, experience, and valour of the Gothic king.

From the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, Theodoric reigned by the right of conquest; the Vandal ambassadors surrendered the island of Sicily, as a lawful appendage of his kingdom; and he was accepted as the deliverer of Rome by the senate and people, who had shut their gates against the flying usurper. Ravenna alone, secure in the fortifications of art and nature, still sustained a siege of almost three years; and the daring sallies of Odoacer carried slaughter and dismay into the Gothic camp. At length, destitute of provisions, and hopeless of relief, that unfortunate monarch yielded

[1 Tufa was his name; he first left Odoacer for Theodoric; then deserted back again. Hodgkin compares his defection to Marshal Ney's going over to Napoleon when he returned in 1815. Later Tufa was killed in a feud with another deserter from Theodoric, Frederic the Rugian.]

[493 A.D.]

to the groans of his subjects and the clamours of his soldiers. A treaty of peace was negotiated by the bishop of Ravenna; the Ostrogoths were admitted into the city, and the hostile kings consented, under the sanction of an oath, to rule with equal and undivided authority the provinces of Italy. The event of such an agreement may be easily foreseen. After some days had been devoted to the semblance of joy and friendship, Odoacer, in the midst of a solemn banquet, was stabbed by the hand, or at least by the command, of his rival (March 15, 493). Secret and effectual orders had been previously despatched; the faithless and rapacious mercenaries, at the same moment, and without resistance, were universally massacred; and the royalty of Theodoric was proclaimed by the Goths, with the tardy, reluctant, ambiguous consent of the emperor of the East.

The design of a conspiracy was imputed, according to the usual forms, to the prostrate tyrant; but his innocence, and the guilt of his conqueror, are sufficiently proved by the advantageous treaty which force would not sincerely have granted, nor weakness have rashly infringed. The jealousy of power, and the mischiefs of discord, may suggest a more decent apology, and a sentence less rigorous may be pronounced against a crime which was necessary to introduce into Italy a generation of public felicity. The living author of this felicity was audaciously praised in his own presence by sacred and profane orators; but history (in his time she was mute and inglorious) has not left any just representation of the events which displayed, or of the defects which clouded, the virtues of Theodoric.

The reputation of Theodoric may repose with more confidence on the visible peace and prosperity of a reign of thirty-three years; the unanimous esteem of his own times, and the memory of his wisdom and courage, his justice and humanity, which was deeply impressed on the minds of the Goths and Italians.

### THEODORIC THE GREAT (493–526 A.D.)

The partition of the lands of Italy, of which Theodoric assigned the third part to his soldiers, is honourably arraigned as the sole injustice of his life. And even this act may be fairly justified by the example of Odoacer, the rights of conquest, the true interest of the Italians, and the sacred duty of subsisting a whole people, who, on the faith of his promises, had transported themselves into a distant land. Under the reign of Theodoric, and in the happy climate of Italy, the Goths soon multiplied to a formidable host of two hundred thousand men, and the whole amount of their families may be computed by the ordinary addition of women and children. Their invasion of property, a part of which must have been already vacant, was disguised by the generous but improper name of hospitality; these unwelcome guests were irregularly dispersed over the face of Italy, and the lot of each barbarian was adequate to his birth and office, the number of his followers, and the rustic wealth which he possessed in slaves and cattle. The distinctions of noble and plebeian were acknowledged; but the lands of every freeman were exempt from taxes, and he enjoyed the inestimable privilege of being subject only to the laws of his country. Fashion, and even convenience, soon persuaded the conquerors to assume the more elegant dress of the natives, but they still persisted in the use of their mother-tongue; and their contempt for the Latin schools was applauded by Theodoric himself, who gratified their prejudices, or his own, by declaring, that the child who had trembled at a rod, would never dare to look upon a sword.

Theodoric studied to protect his industrious subjects, and to moderate the violence, without enervating the valour, of his soldiers who were maintained for the public defence. They held their lands and benefices as a military stipend; at the sound of the trumpet they were prepared to march under the conduct of their provincial officers; and the whole extent of Italy was distributed into the several quarters of a well-regulated camp.

Among the barbarians of the West, the victory of Theodoric had spread a general alarm. But as soon as it appeared that he was satisfied with conquest, and desirous of peace, terror was changed into respect, and they submitted to a powerful mediation, which was uniformly employed for the best purposes of reconciling their quarrels and civilising their manners. The ambassadors who resorted to Ravenna from the most distant countries of Europe, admired his wisdom, magnificence, and courtesy; and if he sometimes accepted either slaves or arms, white horses or strange animals, the gift of a sun-dial, a water-clock, or a musician admonished even the princes of Gaul of the superior art and industry of his Italian subjects. His domestic alliances, a wife, two daughters, a sister, and a niece, united the family of Theodoric with the kings of the Franks, the Burgundians, the Visigoths, the Vandals, and the Thuringians; and contributed to maintain the harmony, or at least the balance, of the great republic of the West. It is difficult, in the dark forest of Germany and Poland, to pursue the emigration of the Heruli, a fierce people, who disdained the use of armour, and who condemned their widows and aged parents not to survive the loss of their husbands, or the decay of their strength. The king of these savage warriors solicited the friendship of Theodoric, and was elevated to the rank of his son, according to the barbaric rites of a military adoption. From the shores of the Baltic, the Æstians, or Livonians, laid their offerings of native amber at the feet of a prince, whose fame had excited them to undertake an unknown and dangerous journey of fifteen hundred miles.

The life of Theodoric represents the rare and meritorious example of a barbarian, who sheathed his sword in the pride of victory and the vigour of his age. A reign of three-and-thirty years was consecrated to the duties of civil government, and the hostilities in which he was sometimes involved were speedily terminated by the conduct of his lieutenants, the discipline of his troops, the arms of his allies, and even by the terror of his name. He reduced, under a strong and regular government, the unprofitable countries of Rætia, Noricum, Dalmatia, and Pannonia, from the source of the Danube and the territory of the Bavarians, to the petty kingdom erected by the Gepids on the ruins of Sirmium. His prudence could not safely entrust the bulwark of Italy to such feeble and turbulent neighbours; and his justice might claim the lands which they oppressed, either as a part of his kingdom, or as the inheritance of his father.

The greatness of a servant, who was named perfidious because he was successful, awakened the jealousy of the emperor Anastasius; and a war was kindled on the Dacian frontier, by the protection which the Gothic king, in the vicissitude of human affairs, had granted to Mundo, a descendant of Attila. Sabinian, a general illustrious by his own and father's merit, advanced at the head of ten thousand Romans; and the provisions and arms, which filled a long train of wagons, were distributed to the fiercest of the Bulgarian tribes. But, in the fields of Margus, the eastern powers were defeated by the inferior forces of the Goths and Huns; the flower and even the hope of the Roman armies was irretrievably destroyed; and such was the temperance with which Theodoric had inspired his victorious troops,

that as their leader had not given the signal of pillage, the rich spoils of the enemy lay untouched at their feet.

Exasperated by this disgrace, the Byzantine court despatched two hundred ships and eight thousand men to plunder the sea coast of Calabria and Apulia; they assaulted the ancient city of Tarentum, interrupted the trade and agriculture of a happy country, and sailed back to the Hellespont, proud of their piratical victory over a people whom they still presumed to consider as their Roman brethren. Their retreat was possibly hastened by the activity of Theodoric; Italy was covered by a fleet of a thousand light vessels, which he constructed with incredible despatch; and his firm moderation was soon rewarded by a solid and honourable peace. He maintained with a powerful hand the balance of the West, till it was at length overthrown by the ambition of Clovis; and although unable to assist his rash and unfortunate kinsman, the king of the Visigoths, he saved the remains of his family and people, and checked the Franks in the midst of their victorious career.

It is not desirous to prolong or repeat this narrative of military events, the least interesting of the reign of Theodoric; and we shall be content to add that the Alamanni were protected, that an inroad of the Burgundians was severely chastised, and that the conquest of Arles and Marseilles opened a free communication with the Visigoths, who revered him both as their national protector, and as the guardian of his grandchild, the infant son of Alaric. Under this respectable character, the king of Italy restored the prætorian prefecture of the Gauls, reformed some abuses in the civil government of Spain, and accepted the annual tribute and apparent submission of its military governor, who wisely refused to trust his person in the palace of Ravenna. The Gothic sovereignty was established from Sicily to the Danube, from Sirmium or Belgrade to the Atlantic Ocean; and the Greeks themselves have acknowledged that Theodoric reigned over the fairest portion of the Western Empire.

The union of the Goths and Romans might have fixed for ages the transient happiness of Italy; and the first of nations, a new people of free subjects and enlightened soldiers, might have gradually arisen from the mutual emulation of their respective virtues. But the sublime merit of guiding or seconding such a revolution, was not reserved for the reign of Theodoric; he wanted either the genius or the opportunities of a legislator; and while he indulged the Goths in the enjoyment of rude liberty, he servilely copied the institutions, and even the abuses, of the political system which had been framed by Constantine and his successors. From a tender regard to the expiring prejudices of Rome, the barbarian declined the name, the purple, and the diadem, of the emperors; but he assumed, under the hereditary title of king, the whole substance and plenitude of imperial prerogative. His addresses to the eastern throne were respectful and ambiguous; he celebrated in pompous style the harmony of the two republics, applauded his own government as the perfect similitude of a sole and undivided empire, and claimed above the kings of the earth the same pre-eminence which he modestly allowed to the person or rank of Anastasius. The alliance of the East and West was annually declared by the unanimous choice of two consuls; but it should seem that the Italian candidate who was named by Theodoric, accepted a formal confirmation from the sovereign of Constantinople.

The Gothic palace of Ravenna reflected the image of the court of Theodosius or Valentinian. The prætorian prefect, the prefect of Rome, the quæstor, the master of the offices, with the public and patrimonial treasurers, whose functions are painted in gaudy colours by the rhetoric of Cassiodorus,

still continued to act as the ministers of state. And the subordinate care of justice and the revenue was delegated to seven consulars, three correctors and five presidents, who governed the fifteen regions of Italy, according to the principles and even the forms of Roman jurisprudence. The violence of the conquerors was abated or eluded by the slow artifice of judicial proceedings; the civil administration, with its honours and emoluments, was confined to the Italians; and the people still preserved their dress and language, their laws and customs, their personal freedom, and two-thirds of their landed property. It had been the object of Augustus to conceal the introduction of monarchy; it was the policy of Theodoric to disguise the reign of a barbarian. If his subjects were sometimes awakened from this pleasing vision of a Roman government, they derived more substantial comfort from the character of a Gothic prince, who had penetration to discern, and firmness to pursue, his own and the public interest. Theodoric loved the virtues which he possessed, and the talents of which he was destitute. Liberius was promoted to the office of prætorian prefect for his unshaken fidelity to the unfortunate cause of Odoacer. The ministers of Theodoric, Cassiodorus and Boethius, have reflected on his reign the lustre of their genius and learning. More prudent or more fortunate than his colleague, Cassiodorus preserved his own esteem without forfeiting the royal favour; and after passing thirty years in the honours of the world, he was blessed with an equal term of repose in the devout and studious solitude of Squillace (Sylacium).

The public games, such as a Greek ambassador might politely applaud, exhibited a faint and feeble copy of the magnificence of the cæsars: yet the musical, the gymnastic, and the pantomimic arts, had not totally sunk into oblivion; the wild beasts of Africa still exercised in the amphitheatre the courage and dexterity of the hunters; and the indulgent Goth either patiently tolerated or gently restrained the blue and green factions, whose contests so often filled the circus with clamour, and even with blood. In the seventh year of his reign, Theodoric visited Rome, the old capital of the world; the senate and people advanced in solemn procession to salute a second Trajan, a new Valentinian; and he nobly supported that character by the assurance of a just and legal government, in a discourse which he was not afraid to pronounce in public, and to inscribe on a tablet of brass.

Rome, in this august ceremony, shot a last ray of declining glory; and a saint, the spectator of this pompous scene, could only hope in his pious fancy, that it was excelled by the celestial splendour of the New Jerusalem. During a residence of six months, the fame, the person, and the courteous demeanour of the Gothic king excited the admiration of the Romans, and he contemplated with equal curiosity and surprise the monuments that remained of their ancient greatness. He imprinted the footsteps of a conqueror on the Capitoline Hill, and frankly confessed that each day he viewed with fresh wonder the Forum of Trajan and his lofty column. The theatre of Pompey appeared, even in its decay, as a huge mountain artificially hollowed and polished, and adorned by human industry; and he vaguely computed, that a river of gold must have been drained to erect the colossal amphitheatre of Titus. From the mouths of fourteen aqueducts, a pure and copious stream was diffused into every part of the city; among these the Claudian water, which arose at the distance of thirty-eight miles in the Sabine mountains, was conveyed along a gentle though constant declivity of solid arches, till it descended on the summit of the Aventine Hill. The long and spacious vaults which had been constructed for the purpose of common sewers, subsisted, after twelve centuries, in their pristine strength;

and the subterraneous channels have been preferred to all the visible wonders of Rome.

The Gothic kings, so injuriously accused of the ruin of antiquity, were anxious to preserve the monuments of the nation whom they had subdued. The royal edicts were framed to prevent the abuses, the neglect, or the depredations, of the citizens themselves; and a professed architect, the annual sum of two hundred pounds of gold, twenty-five thousand tiles, and the receipt of customs from the Lucrine port, were assigned for the ordinary repairs of the walls and public edifices. A similar care was extended to the statues of metal or marble, of men or animals. The spirit of the horses, which have given a modern name to the Quirinal, was applauded by the barbarians; the brazen elephants of the Via Sacra were diligently restored; the famous heifer of Myron deceived the cattle, as they were driven through the forum of peace, and an officer was created to protect those works of art, which Theodoric considered as the noblest ornaments of his kingdom.

After the example of the last emperors, Theodoric preferred the residence of Ravenna, where he cultivated an orchard with his own hands. As often as the peace of his kingdom was threatened (for it was never invaded) by the barbarians, he removed his court to Verona, on the northern frontier, and the image of his palace, still extant on a coin, represents the oldest and most authentic model of Gothic architecture. Agriculture revived under the shadow of peace, and the number of husbandmen was multiplied by the redemption of captives. The iron mines of Dalmatia, a gold mine of Bruttium, were carefully explored, and the Pontine marshes, as well as those of Spoleto, were drained and cultivated by private undertakers, whose distant reward must depend on the continuance of the public prosperity. Whenever the seasons were less propitious, the doubtful precautions of forming magazines of corn, fixing the price, and prohibiting the exportation, attested at least the benevolence of the state; but such was the extraordinary plenty which an industrious people produced from a grateful soil, that a gallon of wine was sometimes sold in Italy for something less than three farthings, and a quarter of wheat (8 bushels) at about five shillings and sixpence. A country possessed of so many valuable objects of exchange, soon attracted the merchants of the world, whose beneficial traffic was encouraged and protected by the liberal spirit of Theodoric. The free intercourse of the provinces by land and water was restored and extended; the city gates were never shut either by day or by night; and the common saying, that a purse of gold might be safely left in the fields, was expressive of the conscious security of the inhabitants.

### THEODORIC AND THE CHURCH

A difference of religion is always pernicious and often fatal to the harmony of the prince and people; the Gothic conqueror had been educated in the profession of Arianism, and Italy was devoutly attached to the Nicene faith. But the persuasion of Theodoric was not infected by zeal, and he piously adhered to the heresy of his fathers, without condescending to balance the subtle arguments of theological metaphysics. Satisfied with the private toleration of his Arian sectaries, he justly conceived himself to be the guardian of the public worship; and his external reverence for a superstition which he despised, may have nourished in his mind the salutary indifference to a statesman or philosopher. With the protection, Theodoric

assumed the legal supremacy of the church; and his firm administration restored or extended some useful prerogatives, which had been neglected by the feeble emperors of the West. He was not ignorant of the dignity and importance of the Roman pontiff, to whom the venerable name of Pope was now appropriated. The peace or the revolt of Italy might depend on the character of a wealthy and popular bishop, who claimed such ample dominion, both in heaven and earth; who had been declared in a numerous synod to be pure from all sin, and exempt from all judgment. When the chair of St. Peter was disputed by Symmachus and Laurentius, they appeared at his summons before the tribunal of an Arian monarch, and he confirmed the election of the most worthy, or the most obsequious candidate. At the end of his life, in a moment of jealousy and resentment, he prevented the choice of the Romans, by nominating a pope in the palace of Ravenna. The danger and furious contests of a schism were mildly restrained, and the last decree of the senate was enacted to extinguish, if it were possible, the scandalous venality of the papal elections.

We have descanted with pleasure on the fortunate condition of Italy; but our fancy must not hastily conceive that the golden age of the poets, a race of men without vice or misery, was realised under the Gothic conquest. The fair prospect was sometimes overcast with clouds; the wisdom of Theodoric might be deceived, his power might be resisted, and the declining age of the monarch was sullied with popular hatred and patrician blood. In the first insolence of victory, he had been tempted to deprive the whole party of Odoacer of the civil, and even the natural rights of society; a tax unseasonably imposed after the calamities of war, would have crushed the rising agriculture of Liguria: a rigid pre-emption of corn, which was intended for the public relief, must have aggravated the distress of Campania. These dangerous projects were defeated by the virtue and eloquence of Epiphanius and Boethius, who, in the presence of Theodoric himself, successfully pleaded the cause of the people: but if the royal ear was open to the voice of truth, a saint and a philosopher are not always to be found at the ear of kings. The privileges of rank, or office, or favour, were too frequently abused by Italian fraud and Gothic violence; and the avarice of the king's nephew was publicly exposed, at first by the usurpation, and afterwards by the restitution, of the estates which he had unjustly extorted from his Tuscan neighbours. Two hundred thousand barbarians, formidable even to their master, were seated in the heart of Italy; they indignantly supported the restraints of peace and discipline; the disorders of their march were always felt, and sometimes compensated; and where it was dangerous to punish, it might be prudent to dissemble, the sallies of their native fierceness.

Even the religious toleration which Theodoric had the glory of introducing into the Christian world, was painful and offensive to the orthodox zeal of the Italians. They respected the armed heresy of the Goths; but their pious rage was safely pointed against the rich and defenceless Jews, who had formed their establishments at Neapolis, Rome, Ravenna, Mediolanum, and Genoa, for the benefit of trade, and under the sanction of the laws. Their persons were insulted, their effects were pillaged, and their synagogues were burned by the mad populace of Ravenna and Rome, inflamed, as it should seem, by the most frivolous or extravagant pretences. The government which could neglect, would have deserved such an outrage. A legal inquiry was instantly directed; and as the authors of the tumult had escaped in the crowd, the whole community was condemned to repair the damage; and the obstinate bigots who refused their contributions, were whipped through

the streets by the hand of the executioner. This simple act of justice exasperated the discontent of the Catholics, who applauded the merit and patience of these holy confessors; three hundred pulpits deplored the persecution of the church; and if the chapel of St. Stephen at Verona was demolished by the command of Theodoric, it is probable that some miracle, hostile to his name and dignity, had been performed on that sacred theatre. At the close of a glorious life, the king of Italy discovered that he had excited the hatred of a people whose happiness he had so assiduously laboured to promote; and his mind was soured by indignation, jealousy, and the bitterness of unrequited love. The Gothic conqueror condescended to disarm the unwarlike natives of Italy, interdicting all weapons of offence, and excepting only a small knife for domestic use. The deliverer of Rome was accused of conspiring with the vilest informers against the lives of senators whom he suspected of a secret and treasonable correspondence with the Byzantine court.

After the death of Anastasius, the diadem had been placed on the head of a feeble old man; but the powers of government were assumed by his nephew Justinian, who already meditated the extirpation of heresy, and the conquest of Italy and Africa. A rigorous law, which was published at Constantinople, to reduce the Arians by the dread of punishment within the pale of the church, awakened the just resentment of Theodoric, who claimed, for his distressed brethren of the East, the same indulgence which he had so long granted to the Catholics of his dominions. At his command, the Roman pontiff, John I, with four illustrious senators, embarked on an embassy, of which he must have alike dreaded the failure or the success. The singular veneration shown to the first pope who had visited Constantinople was punished as a crime by his jealous monarch; the artful or peremptory refusal of the Byzantine court might excuse an equal, and would provoke a larger, measure of retaliation; and a mandate was prepared in Italy, to prohibit, after a stated day, the exercise of the Catholic worship. By the bigotry of his subjects and enemies, the most tolerant of princes was driven to the brink of persecution; and the life of Theodoric was too long, since he lived to condemn the virtue of Boethius and Symmachus.

### THE FATE OF BOETHIUS AND SYMMACHUS

The senator Boethius is the last of the Romans whom Cato or Tully could have acknowledged for their countryman. As a wealthy orphan, he inherited the patrimony and honours of the Anician family. Boethius is said to have employed eighteen laborious years in the schools of Athens, which were supported by the zeal, the learning, and the diligence of Proclus and his disciples. After his return to Rome, and his marriage with the daughter of his friend, the patrician Symmachus, Boethius still continued, in a palace of ivory and marble, to prosecute the same studies. The church was edified by his profound defence of the orthodox creed against the Arian, the Eutychian, and the Nestorian heresies; and the Catholic unity was explained or exposed in a formal treatise by the indifference of three distinct, though consubstantial, persons. For the benefit of his Latin readers, his genius submitted to teach the first elements of the arts and sciences of Greece. The geometry of Euclid, the music of Pythagoras, the arithmetic of Nicomachus, the mechanics of Archimedes, the astronomy of Ptolemy, the theology of Plato, and the logic of Aristotle, with the commentary of

Porphyry, were translated and illustrated by the indefatigable pen of the Roman senator. And he alone was esteemed capable of describing the wonders of art, a sun-dial, a water-clock, or a sphere which represented the motions of the planets.

From these abstruse speculations, Boethius stooped, or, to speak more truly, he rose to the social duties of public and private life; the indigent were relieved by his liberality; and his eloquence, which flattery might compare to the voice of Demosthenes or Cicero, was uniformly exerted in the cause of innocence and humanity. Such conspicuous merit was felt and rewarded by a discerning prince; the dignity of Boethius was adorned with the titles of consul and patrician, and his talents were usefully employed in the important station of master of the offices. Notwithstanding the equal claims of the East and West, his two sons were created, in their tender youth, the consuls of the same year.

But the favour and fidelity of Boethius declined in just proportion with the public happiness; and an unworthy colleague was imposed, to divide and control the power of the master of the offices. In the last gloomy season of Theodoric, he indignantly felt that he was a slave; but as his master had only power over his life, he stood without arms and without fear against the face of an angry barbarian, who had been provoked to believe that the safety of the senate was incompatible with his own. The senator Albinus was accused, and already convicted, on the presumption of hoping, as it was said, the liberty of Rome. "If Albinus be criminal," exclaimed the orator, "the senate and myself are all guilty of the same crime. If we are innocent, Albinus is equally entitled to the protection of the laws." These laws might not have punished the simple and barren wish of an unattainable blessing; but they would have shown less indulgence to the rash confession of Boethius, that, had he known of a conspiracy, the tyrant never should. The advocate of Albinus was soon involved in the danger, and perhaps the guilt, of his client; their signature (which they denied as a forgery) was affixed to the original address, inviting the emperor to deliver Italy from the Goths; and three witnesses of honourable rank, perhaps of infamous reputation, attested the treasonable designs of the Roman patrician. Yet his innocence must be presumed, since he was deprived by Theodoric of the means of justification, and rigorously confined in the tower of Pavia, while the senate, at the distance of five hundred miles, pronounced a sentence of confiscation and death against the most illustrious of its members. A devout and dutiful attachment to the senate was condemned as criminal by the trembling voices of the senators themselves; and their ingratitude deserved the wish and prediction of Boethius that, after him, none should be found guilty of the same offence.

While Boethius, oppressed with fetters, expected each moment the sentence or the stroke of death, he composed in the tower of Pavia the *Consolation of Philosophy;* a golden volume, not unworthy of the leisure of Plato or Tully, but which claims incomparable merit from the barbarism of the times and the situation of the author. The celestial guide, whom he had so long invoked at Rome and Athens, now condescended to illumine his dungeon, to revive his courage, and to pour into his wounds her salutary balm. Suspense, the worst of evils, was at length determined by the ministers of death, who executed, and perhaps exceeded, the inhuman mandate of Theodoric. A strong cord was fastened round the head of Boethius,[1] and forcibly tight-

[1 Hodgkin c doubts this story, which rests solely on the anonymous Valesian Ms. *k*]

ened, till his eyes almost started from their sockets; and some mercy may be discovered in the milder torture of beating him with clubs till he expired. But his genius survived to diffuse a ray of knowledge over the darkest ages of the Latin world; the writings of the philosopher were translated by the most glorious of English kings, and the third emperor of the name of Otho removed to a more honourable tomb the bones of a Catholic saint, who, from his Arian persecutors, had acquired the honours of martyrdom, and the fame of miracles.

In the last hours of Boethius he derived some comfort from the safety of his two sons, of his wife, and of his father-in-law, the venerable Symmachus. But the grief of Symmachus was indiscreet, and perhaps disrespectful; he had presumed to lament, he might dare to revenge, the death of an injured friend. He was dragged in chains from Rome to the palace of Ravenna; and the suspicions of Theodoric could only be appeased by the blood of an innocent and aged senator.

Humanity will be disposed to encourage any report which testifies the jurisdiction or conscience and the remorse of kings; and philosophy is not ignorant that the most horrid spectres are sometimes created by the powers of a disordered fancy, and the weakness of a distempered body. After a life of virtue and glory, Theodoric was now descending with shame and guilt into the grave; his mind was humbled by the contrast of the past, and justly alarmed by the invisible terrors of futurity. One evening, as it is related,[1] when the head of a large fish was served on the royal table, he suddenly exclaimed that he beheld the angry countenance of Symmachus, his eyes glaring fury and revenge, and his mouth armed with long sharp teeth, which threatened to devour him. The monarch instantly retired to his chamber, and as he lay trembling with anguish, cold under the weight of bed-clothes, he expressed in broken murmurs to his physician Elpidius his deep repentance for the murders of Boethius and Symmachus. His malady increased, and after a dysentery which continued three days, he expired in the palace of Ravenna, in the thirty-third, or, if we compute from the invasion of Italy, in the thirty-seventh year of his reign, August 30, 526.

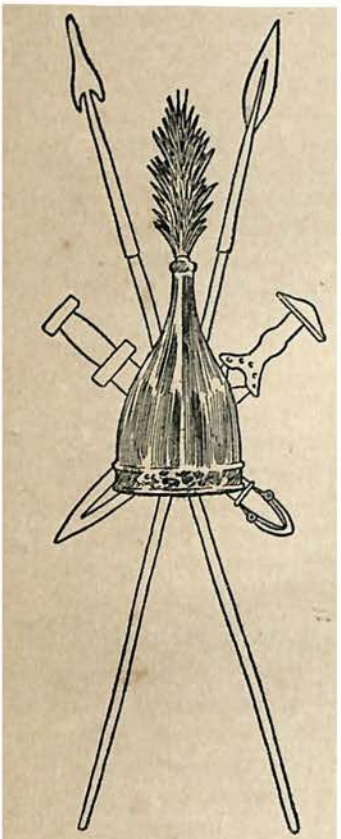
Conscious of his approaching end, he divided his treasures and provinces between his two grandsons, and fixed the Rhone as their common boundary. Amalaric was restored to the throne of Spain. Italy, with all the conquests of the Ostrogoths, was bequeathed to Athalaric; whose age did not exceed ten years, but who was cherished as the last male offspring of the line of Amali, by the short-lived marriage of his mother Amalasuntha with a royal fugitive of the same blood. In the presence of the dying monarch, the Gothic chiefs and Italian magistrates mutually engaged their faith and loyalty to the young prince, and to his guardian mother; and received, in the same awful moment, his last salutary advice, to maintain the laws, to love the senate and people of Rome, and to cultivate with decent reverence the friendship of the emperor. The monument of Theodoric was erected by his daughter Amalasuntha, in a conspicuous situation, which commanded the city of Ravenna, the harbour, and the adjacent coast. A chapel of a circular form, thirty feet in diameter, is crowned by a dome of one entire piece of granite: from the centre of the dome four columns arose, which supported, in a vase of porphyry, the remains of the Gothic king, surrounded by the brazen statues of the twelve apostles. His spirit, after some previous expiation, might have been permitted to mingle with the benefactors of mankind,

[1] The story is told by Procopius.]

if an Italian hermit had not been witness in a vision to the damnation of Theodoric, whose soul was plunged, by the ministers of divine vengeance,[1] into the volcano of Lipari, one of the flaming mouths of the infernal world.

### THE TROUBLES OF AMALASUNTHA

The birth of Amalasuntha, the regent and queen of Italy, united the two most illustrious families of the barbarians. Her mother, the sister of Clovis, was descended from the long-haired kings of the Merovingian race, and the regal succession of the Amali was illustrated in the eleventh generation, by her father, the great Theodoric, whose merit might have ennobled a plebeian origin. The sex of his daughter excluded her from the Gothic throne: but his vigilant tenderness for his family and his people discovered the last heir of the royal line, whose ancestors had taken refuge in Spain; and the fortunate Eutharic was suddenly exalted to the rank of a consul and a prince. He enjoyed only a short time the charms of Amalasuntha, and the hopes of the succession; and his widow, after the death of her husband and father, was left the guardian of her son Athalaric, and the kingdom of Italy. At the age of about twenty-eight years, the endowments of her mind and person had attained their perfect maturity. Her beauty, which, in the apprehension of Theodora herself, might have disputed the conquest of an emperor, was animated by manly sense, activity, and resolution. Education and experience had cultivated her talents; her philosophic studies were exempt from vanity; and, though she expressed herself with equal elegance and ease in the Greek, the Latin, and the Gothic tongue, the daughter of Theodoric maintained in her counsels a discreet and impenetrable silence.



GOTHIC HELMET AND WEAPONS

By a faithful imitation of the virtues she revived the prosperity of his reign; while she strove, with pious care, to expiate the faults, and to obliterate the darker memory, of his declining age. The children of Boethius and Symmachus were restored to their paternal inheritance; her extreme lenity never consented to inflict any corporal or pecuniary penalties on her Roman subjects; and she generously despised the clamours of the Goths, who, at the end of forty years, still considered the people of Italy as their slaves or their enemies. Her salutary measures were directed by the wisdom, and celebrated by the eloquence, of Cassiodorus[i]; she solicited and deserved the friendship of the emperor; and the kingdoms of Europe respected, both in peace and war, the majesty of the Gothic throne.

[1 This story is told in the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory. On the legend Hodgkin comments, "For that noble heart Hell itself could scarcely reserve any sorer punishment than the consciousness of a life's labour wasted by one fierce outbreak of Berseker rage." Procopius[j] calls his treatment of Boethius and Symmachus "the first and last act of injustice which he had committed against any of his subjects; and the cause was his failure to look deeply enough into the evidence before he gave his verdict."]

[526–534 A.D.]

But the future happiness of the queen and of Italy depended on the education of her son, who was destined, by his birth, to support the different and almost incompatible characters of the chief of a barbarian camp, and the first magistrate of a civilised nation. From the age of ten years, Athalaric was diligently instructed in the arts and sciences, either useful or ornamental for a Roman prince; and three venerable Goths were chosen to instil the principles of honour and virtue into the mind of their young king. But the pupil who is insensible of the benefits, must abhor the restraints, of education; and the solicitude of the queen, which affection rendered anxious and severe, offended the untractable nature of her son and his subjects. On a solemn festival, when the Goths were assembled in the palace of Ravenna, the royal youth escaped from his mother's apartment, and, with tears of pride and anger, complained of a blow which his stubborn disobedience had provoked her to inflict. The barbarians resented the indignity which had been offered to their king; accused the regent of conspiring against his life and crown; and imperiously demanded that the grandson of Theodoric should be rescued from the dastardly discipline of women and pedants, and educated, like a valiant Goth, in the society of his equals, and the glorious ignorance of his ancestors. To this rude clamour, importunately urged as the voice of the nation, Amalasuntha was compelled to yield her reason, and the dearest wishes of her heart.

The king of Italy was abandoned to wine, to women, and to rustic sports; and the indiscreet contempt of the ungrateful youth betrayed the mischievous designs of his favourites and her enemies. Encompassed with domestic foes, she entered into a secret negotiation with the emperor Justinian; obtained the assurance of a friendly reception, and had actually deposited at Dyrrhachium in Epirus a treasure of forty thousand pounds of gold. Happy would it have been for her fame and safety, if she had calmly retired from barbarous faction to the peace and splendour of Constantinople. But the mind of Amalasuntha was inflamed by ambition and revenge; and while her ships lay at anchor in the port, she waited for the success of a crime which her passions excused or applauded as an act of justice. Three of the most dangerous malcontents had been separately removed, under the pretence of trust and command, to the frontiers of Italy: they were assassinated by her private emissaries; and the blood of these noble Goths rendered the queen-mother absolute in the court of Ravenna, and justly odious to a free people. But if she had lamented the disorders of her son, she soon wept his irreparable loss; and the death of Athalaric, in 534, who, at the age of sixteen, was consumed by premature intemperance, left her destitute of any firm support or legal authority. [Athalaric died of the plague.]

Instead of submitting to the laws of her country, which held as a fundamental maxim, that the succession could never pass from the lance to the distaff, the daughter of Theodoric conceived the impracticable design of sharing with one of her cousins the regal title, and of reserving in her own hands the substance of supreme power. He received the proposal with profound respect and affected gratitude; and the eloquent Cassiodorus announced to the senate and the emperor, that Amalasuntha and Theodatus [or Theodahad] had ascended the throne.[1] His birth (for his mother was the sister of Theodoric) might be considered as an imperfect title; and the choice of Amalasuntha was more strongly directed by her contempt of his avarice and

[1 "My conjecture," says Hodgkin,*c* "is that there was some formality of a popular election after the death of Athalaric in compliance with which his mother and her colleague ascended the throne."]

pusillanimity, which had deprived him of the love of the Italians, and the esteem of the barbarians. But Theodatus was exasperated by the contempt which he deserved; her justice had repressed and reproached the oppression which he exercised against his Tuscan neighbours; and the principal Goths, united by common guilt and resentment, conspired to instigate his slow and timid disposition. The letters of congratulation were scarcely despatched before the queen of Italy was imprisoned in a small island of the lake of Volsiniensis (Bolsena), where, after a short confinement, she was strangled in the bath, by the order, or with the connivance, of the new king,[1] who instructed his turbulent subjects to shed the blood of their sovereigns (May? 535).

### JUSTINIAN INTERVENES

Justinian beheld with joy the dissensions of the Goths; and the mediation of an ally concealed and promoted the ambitious views of the conqueror. His ambassadors, in their public audience, demanded the fortress of Lilybæum, ten barbarian fugitives, and a just compensation for the pillage of a small town on the Illyrian borders; but they secretly negotiated with Theodatus to betray the province of Tuscany, and tempted Amalasuntha to extricate herself from danger and perplexity, by a free surrender of the kingdom of Italy. A false and servile epistle was subscribed by the reluctant hand of the captive queen; but the confession of the Roman senators, who were sent to Constantinople, revealed the truth of her deplorable situation; and Justinian, by the voice of a new ambassador, most powerfully interceded for her life and liberty. Yet the secret instructions of the same minister were adapted to serve the cruel jealousy of Theodora, who dreaded the presence and superior charms of a rival: he prompted, with artful and ambiguous hints, the execution of a crime so useful to the Romans; received the intelligence of her death with grief and indignation, and denounced, in his master's name, immortal war against the perfidious assassin.

In Italy as well as in Africa, the guilt of an usurper appeared to justify the arms of Justinian; but the forces which he prepared were insufficient for the subversion of a mighty kingdom, if their feeble numbers had not been multiplied by the name, the spirit, and the conduct of a hero. A chosen troop of guards, who served on horseback, and were armed with lances and bucklers, attended the person of Belisarius: his cavalry was composed of two hundred Huns, three hundred Moors, and four thousand confederates, and the infantry consisted only of three thousand Isaurians. Steering the same course as in his former expedition, the Roman consul cast anchor before Catana in Sicily, to survey the strength of the island, and to decide whether he should attempt the conquest, or peaceably pursue his voyage for the African coast. He found a fruitful land and a friendly people. Notwithstanding the decay of agriculture, Sicily still supplied the granaries of Rome; the farmers were graciously exempted from the oppression of military quarters; and the Goths, who trusted the defence of the island to the inhabitants, had some reason to complain that their confidence was ungratefully betrayed: instead of soliciting and expecting the aid of the king of Italy, they yielded to the first summons a cheerful obedience: and this province, the first-fruits of the Punic Wars, was again, after a long separation, united to the Roman Empire (535).

[1 Hodgkin, regretting her misfortunes, calls Amalasuntha "a kind of Gothic Minerva sprung from the Gothic Jove."]

[535–536 A.D.]

The Gothic garrison of Palermo, which alone attempted to resist, was reduced, after a short siege, by a singular stratagem. Belisarius introduced his ships into the deepest recess of the harbour; their boats were laboriously hoisted with ropes and pulleys to the topmast head, and he filled them with archers, who from that superior station commanded the ramparts of the city. After this easy though successful campaign, the conqueror entered Syracuse in triumph, at the head of his victorious bands, distributing gold medals to the people, on the day which so gloriously terminated the year of the consulship. He passed the winter season in the palace of ancient kings, amidst the ruins of a Grecian colony, which once extended to a circumference of two-and-twenty miles; but in the spring, about the festival of Easter, the prosecution of his designs was interrupted by a dangerous revolt of the African forces.

Although Theodatus descended from a race of heroes, he was ignorant of the art, and averse to the dangers, of war. Although he had studied the writings of Plato and Tully, philosophy was incapable of purifying his mind from the basest passions, avarice and fear. He had purchased a sceptre by ingratitude and murder: at the first menace of an enemy, he degraded his own majesty, and that of a nation which already disdained their unworthy sovereign. Astonished by the recent example of Gelimer, he saw himself dragged in chains through the streets of Constantinople; the terrors which Belisarius inspired were heightened by the eloquence of Petrus, the Byzantine ambassador; and that bold and subtle advocate persuaded him to sign a treaty, too ignominious to become the foundation of a lasting peace.

Justinian required and accepted the abdication of the Gothic king. His indefatigable agent returned from Constantinople to Ravenna, with ample instructions; and a fair epistle, which praised the wisdom and generosity of the royal philosopher, granted his pension, with the assurance of such honours as a subject and a Catholic might enjoy; and wisely referred the final execution of the treaty to the presence and authority of Belisarius. But in the interval of suspense two Roman generals, who had entered the province of Dalmatia, were defeated and slain by the Gothic troops. From blind and abject despair, Theodatus capriciously rose to groundless and fatal presumption, and dared to receive with menace and contempt the ambassador of Justinian; who claimed his promise, solicited the allegiance of his subjects, and boldly asserted the inviolable privilege of his own character. The march of Belisarius dispelled this visionary pride.

After Belisarius had left sufficient garrisons in Palermo and Syracuse, he embarked his troops at Messina, and landed them, without resistance, on the opposite shores of Rhegium. A Gothic prince, who had married the daughter of Theodatus, was stationed with an army to guard the entrance of Italy; but he imitated, without scruple, the example of a sovereign faithless to his public and private duties. The perfidious Ebermor deserted with his followers to the Roman camp, and was dismissed to enjoy the servile honours of the Byzantine court. From Rhegium to Neapolis (Naples) the fleet and army of Belisarius, almost always in view of each other, advanced near three hundred miles along the sea coast.

In a much later period, the circumference of Naples measured only 2363 paces: the fortifications were defended by precipices or the sea: when the aqueducts were intercepted, a supply of water might be drawn from wells and fountains; and the stock of provisions was sufficient to consume the patience of the besiegers. At the end of twenty days, that of Belisarius was almost exhausted, and he had reconciled himself to the disgrace of abandon-

ing the siege, that he might march, before the winter season, against Rome and the Gothic king. But his anxiety was relieved by the bold curiosity of an Isaurian, who explored the dry channel of an aqueduct, and secretly reported that a passage might be perforated to introduce a file of armed soldiers into the heart of the city. When the work had been silently executed, the humane general risked the discovery of his secret, by a last and fruitless admonition of the impending danger. In the darkness of the night four hundred Romans entered the aqueduct, raised themselves by a rope, which they fastened to an olive tree, into the house or garden of a solitary matron, sounded their trumpets, surprised the sentinels, and gave admittance to their companions, who on all sides scaled the walls and burst open the gates of the city. Every crime which is punished by social justice was practised as the rights of war; the Huns were distinguished by cruelty and sacrilege, and Belisarius alone appeared in the streets and churches of Naples, to moderate the calamities which he predicted.

A GOTH, PEASANT COSTUME

The faithful soldiers and citizens of Neapolis had expected their deliverance from a prince who remained the inactive and almost indifferent spectator of their ruin. Theodatus secured his person within the walls of Rome, while his cavalry advanced forty miles on the Appian way, and encamped in the Pontine marshes; which, by a canal of nineteen miles in length, had been recently drained and converted into excellent pastures. But the principal forces of the Goths were dispersed in Dalmatia, Venetia, and Gaul; and the feeble mind of their king was confounded by the unsuccessful event of a divination, which seemed to presage the downfall of his empire. The most abject slaves have arraigned the guilt, or weakness, of an unfortunate master. The character of Theodatus was rigorously scrutinised by a free and idle camp of barbarians, conscious of their privilege and power: he was declared unworthy of his race, his nation, and his throne; and their general Witiges, whose valour had been signalised in the Illyrian War, was raised, with unanimous applause, on the bucklers of his companions. On the first rumour, the abdicated monarch fled from the justice of his country; but he was pursued by private revenge.[1] A Goth, whom he had injured in his love, overtook Theodatus on the Flaminian way, and, regardless of his unmanly cries, slaughtered him, as he lay prostrate on the ground (536).

[1 Bury [b] says, "Witiges put Theodatus to death," Hodgkin [c] says that he sent Optaris, from whom Theodatus had taken his bride, to assassinate the fallen monarch.]

[536-537 A.D.]

### WITIGES KING OF THE GOTHS

The choice of the people is the best and purest title to reign over them: yet such is the prejudice of every age, that Witiges impatiently wished to return to Ravenna, where he might seize, with the reluctant hand of the daughter of Amalasuntha, some faint shadow of hereditary right. A national council was immediately held, and the new monarch reconciled the impatient spirit of the barbarians to a measure of disgrace, which the misconduct of his predecessor rendered wise and indispensable. The Goths consented to retreat in the presence of a victorious enemy: to delay till the next spring the operations of offensive war; to summon their scattered forces; to relinquish their distant possessions, and to trust even Rome itself to the faith of its inhabitants. Leuderis, an aged warrior, was left in the capital with four thousand soldiers; a feeble garrison, which might have seconded the zeal, though it was incapable of opposing the wishes, of the Romans. But a momentary enthusiasm of religion and patriotism was kindled in their minds. They furiously exclaimed, that the apostolic throne should no longer be profaned by the triumph or toleration of Arianism; that the tombs of the Cæsars should no longer be trampled by the savages of the north; and, without reflecting that Italy must sink into a province of Constantinople, they fondly hailed the restoration of a Roman emperor as a new era of freedom and prosperity. The deputies of the pope and clergy, of the senate and people, invited the lieutenant of Justinian to accept their voluntary allegiance, and to enter the city, whose gates would be thrown open for his reception.

### BELISARIUS AND THE SIEGE OF ROME (536-538 A.D.)

As soon as Belisarius had fortified his new conquests, Naples and Cumæ, he made his entrance through the Asinarian gate, the garrison departed without molestation along the Flaminian way; and the city, after sixty years' servitude, was delivered from the yoke of the barbarians. Leuderis alone, from a motive of pride or discontent, refused to accompany the fugitives; and the Gothic chief, himself a trophy of the victory, was sent with the keys of Rome to the throne of the emperor Justinian.

The designs of Witiges were executed, during the winter season, with diligence and effect. From their rustic habitations, from their distant garrisons, the Goths assembled at Ravenna for the defence of their country; and such were their numbers, that after an army had been detached for the relief of Dalmatia, 150,000 fighting men marched under the royal standard. According to the degrees of rank or merit, the Gothic king distributed arms and horses, rich gifts and liberal promises; he moved along the Flaminian way, declined the useless sieges of Perusia and Spoleto, respected the impregnable rock of Narni (Narnia), and arrived within two miles of Rome, at the foot of the Milvian bridge. The narrow passage was fortified with a tower, and Belisarius had computed the value of the twenty days, which must be lost in the construction of another bridge. But the consternation of the soldiers of the tower, who either fled or deserted, disappointed his hopes, and betrayed his person into the most imminent danger. At the head of one thousand horse, the Roman general sallied from the Flaminian gate to mark the ground of an advantageous position, and to survey the camp of the barbarians; but while he still believed them on the other

side of the Tiber, he was suddenly encompassed and assaulted by their innumerable squadrons. The fate of Italy depended on his life; and the deserters pointed to the conspicuous horse, a bay, with a white face, which he rode on that memorable day. "Aim at the bay horse," was the universal cry. Every bow was bent, every javelin was directed, against that fatal object, and the command was repeated and obeyed by thousands who were ignorant of its real motive. The bolder barbarians advanced to the more honourable combat of swords and spears; and the praise of an enemy has graced the fall of Visandus, the standard-bearer,[1] who maintained his foremost station, till he was pierced with thirteen wounds, perhaps by the hand of Belisarius himself.

The Roman general was strong, active, and dexterous; on every side he discharged his weighty and mortal strokes; his faithful guards imitated his valour, and defended his person; and the Goths, after the loss of a thousand men, fled before the arms of a hero. They were rashly pursued to their camp; and the Romans, oppressed by multitudes, made a gradual, and at length a precipitate, retreat to the gates of the city; the gates were shut against the fugitives; and the public terror was increased by the report that Belisarius was slain. His countenance was indeed disfigured by sweat, dust, and blood; his voice was hoarse, his strength was almost exhausted; but his unconquerable spirit still remained; he imparted that spirit to his desponding companions; and their last desperate charge was felt by the flying barbarians, as if a new army, vigorous and entire, had been poured from the city. The Flaminian gate was thrown open to a real triumph; but it was not before Belisarius had visited every post, and provided for the public safety, that he could be persuaded by his wife and friends to taste the needful refreshments of food and sleep. In the more improved state of the art of war, a general is seldom required, or even permitted, to display the personal prowess of a soldier; and the example of Belisarius may be added to the rare examples of Henry IV, of Pyrrhus, and of Alexander.

After this first and unsuccessful trial of their enemies, the whole army of the Goths passed the Tiber, and formed the siege of the city, which continued above a year, till their final departure. Rome, in its present state, could send into the field above thirty thousand males of a military age; and, notwithstanding the want of discipline and exercise, the far greater part, inured to the hardships of poverty, might be capable of bearing arms for the defence of their country and religion. The prudence of Belisarius did not neglect this important resource. His soldiers were relieved by the zeal and diligence of the people, who watched while they slept, and laboured while they reposed; he accepted the voluntary service of the bravest and most indigent of the Roman youth; and the companies of townsmen sometimes represented, in a vacant post, the presence of the troops which had been drawn away to more essential duties. But his just confidence was placed in the veterans who had fought under his banner in the Persian and African wars; and although that gallant band was reduced to five thousand men, he undertook, with such contemptible numbers, to defend a circle of twelve miles, against an army of 150,000 barbarians. In the walls of Rome, which Belisarius constructed or restored, the materials of ancient architecture may be discerned; and the whole fortification was completed, except in a chasm still extant between the Pincian and Flaminian gates, which the prejudices of the Goths and Romans left under the effectual guard of St. Peter the apostle. The

[1 Henry Bradley[n] declares that this barbarian's epithet should rather be "the bison," Gibbon's translation as "standard-bearer" being "linguistically impossible."]

[537 A.D.]

battlements or bastions were shaped in sharp angles; a ditch, broad and deep, protected the foot of the rampart; and the archers on the rampart were assisted by military engines — the ballista, a powerful cross-bow, which darted short but massy arrows; the onagri, or wild asses, which, on the principle of a sling, threw stones and bullets of an enormous size. A chain was thrown across the Tiber; the arches of the aqueducts were made impervious, and the mole or sepulchre of Hadrian was converted, for the first time, to the uses of a citadel. That venerable structure, which contained the ashes of the Antonines, was a circular turret rising from a quadrangular basis; it was covered with the white marble of Paros, and decorated by the statues of gods and heroes; and the lover of the arts must read with a sigh, that the works of Praxiteles or Lysippus were torn from their lofty pedestals, and hurled into the ditch on the heads of the besiegers. To each of his lieutenants, Belisarius assigned the defence of a gate, with the wise and peremptory instruction, that, whatever might be the alarm, they should steadily adhere to their respective posts, and trust their general for the safety of Rome.

The formidable hosts of the Goths was insufficient to embrace the ample measure of the city; of the fourteen gates, seven only were invested, from the Prænestine to the Flaminian way; and Witiges divided his troops into six camps, each of which was fortified with a ditch and rampart. On the Tuscan side of the river, a seventh encampment was formed in the field or circus of the Vatican, for the important purpose of commanding the Milvian bridge and the course of the Tiber; but they approached with devotion the adjacent church of St. Peter; and the threshold of the holy apostles was respected during the siege by a Christian enemy.

Eighteen days were employed by the besiegers, to provide all the instruments of attack which antiquity had invented. Fascines were prepared to fill the ditches, scaling-ladders to ascend the walls. The largest trees of the forest supplied the timbers of four battering-rams; their heads were armed with iron; they were suspended by ropes, and each of them was worked by the labour of fifty men. The lofty wooden turrets moved on wheels or rollers, and formed a spacious platform of the level of the rampart. On the morning of the nineteenth day, a general attack was made from the Prænestine gate to the Vatican; seven Gothic columns, with their military engines, advanced to the assault; and the Romans, who lined the ramparts, listened with doubt and anxiety to the cheerful assurances of their commander. As soon as the enemy approached the ditch, Belisarius himself drew the first arrow; and such was his strength and dexterity, that he transfixed the foremost of the barbarian leaders. A shout of applause and victory was re-echoed along the wall. He drew a second arrow, and the stroke was followed with the same success and the same acclamation. The Roman general then gave the word that the archers should aim at the teams of oxen; they were instantly covered with mortal wounds; the towers which they drew remained useless and immovable, and a single moment disconcerted the laborious projects of the king of the Goths.

After this disappointment, Witiges still continued, or feigned to continue, the assault of the Salarian gate, that he might divert the attention of his adversary, while his principal forces more strenuously attacked the Prænestine gate and the sepulchre of Hadrian, at the distance of three miles from each other. Near the former, the double walls of the Vivarium were low or broken; the fortifications of the latter were feebly guarded: the vigour of the Goths was excited by the hope of victory and spoil; and if a single post had given way, the Romans, and Rome itself, were irrecoverably lost.

[537 A.D.]

This perilous day was the most glorious in the life of Belisarius. Amidst tumult and dismay, the whole plan of the attack and defence was distinctly present to his mind; he observed the changes of each instant, weighed every possible advantage, transported his person to the scenes of danger, and communicated his spirit in calm and decisive orders. The contest was fiercely maintained from the morning to the evening; the Goths were repulsed on all sides, and each Roman might boast that he had vanquished thirty barbarians, if the strange disproportion of numbers were not counterbalanced by the merit of one man. Thirty thousand Goths, according to the confession of their own chiefs [so Procopius] claims], perished; and the multitude of the wounded was equal to that of the slain. When they advanced to the assault, their close disorder suffered not a javelin to fall without effect; and as they retired, the populace of the city joined the pursuit, and assailed, with impunity, the backs of their flying enemies. Belisarius instantly sallied from the gates; and while the soldiers chanted his name and victory, the hostile engines of war were reduced to ashes. Such was the loss and consternation of the Goths, that, from this day, the siege of Rome degenerated into a tedious and indolent blockade; and they were incessantly harassed by the Roman general, who, in frequent skirmishes, destroyed about five thousand of their bravest troops.

Belisarius praised the spirit of his troops, condemned their presumption, yielded to their clamours, and prepared the remedies of a defeat, the possibility of which he alone had courage to suspect. In the quarter of the Vatican, the Romans prevailed; and if the irreparable moments had not been wasted in the pillage of the camp, they might have occupied the Milvian bridge, and charged in the rear of the Gothic host. On the other side of the Tiber, Belisarius advanced from the Pincian and Salarian gates. But his army, four thousand soldiers perhaps, was lost in a spacious plain; they were encompassed and oppressed by fresh multitudes, who continually relieved the broken ranks of the barbarians. The valiant leaders of the infantry were unskilled to conquer: they died: the retreat (a hasty retreat) was covered by the prudence of the general, and the victors started back with affright from the formidable aspect of an armed rampart. The reputation of Belisarius was unsullied by a defeat; and the vain confidence of the Goths was not less serviceable to his designs, than the repentance and modesty of the Roman troops.

### SUFFERINGS OF THE ROMANS

From the moment that Belisarius had determined to sustain a siege, his assiduous care provided Rome against the danger of famine, more dreadful than the Gothic arms. An extraordinary supply of corn was imported from Sicily; the harvests of Campania and Tuscany were forcibly swept for the use of the city: and the rights of private property were infringed by the strong plea of the public safety. It might easily be foreseen that the enemy would intercept the aqueducts; and the cessation of the water-mills was the first inconvenience, which was speedily removed by mooring large vessels, and fixing millstones in the current of the river. The stream was soon embarrassed by the trunks of trees, and polluted with dead bodies; yet so effectual were the precautions of the Roman general, that the waters of the Tiber still continued to give motion to the mills and drink to the inhabitants; the more distant quarters were supplied from domestic wells; and a

[537 A.D.]

besieged city might support, without impatience, the privation of her public baths. A large portion of Rome, from the Prænestine gate to the church of St. Paul, was never invested by the Goths; their excursions were restrained by the activity of the Moorish troops; the navigation of the Tiber, and the Latin, Appian, and Ostian ways, were left free and unmolested for the introduction of corn and cattle, or the retreat of the inhabitants, who sought a refuge in Campania or Sicily.

Anxious to relieve himself from a useless and devouring multitude, Belisarius issued his peremptory orders for the instant departure of the women, the children, and the slaves; required his soldiers to dismiss their male and female attendants, and regulated their allowance, that one moiety should be given in provisions, and the other in money. His foresight was justified by the increase of the public distress, as soon as the Goths had occupied two important posts in the neighbourhood of Rome. By the loss of the port, or, as it is now called, the city of Porto, he was deprived of the country on the right of the Tiber, and the best communication with the sea; and he reflected with grief and anger, that three hundred men, could he have spared such a feeble band, might have defended its impregnable works. Seven miles from the capital, between the Appian and the Latin ways, two principal aqueducts, crossing and again crossing each other, enclosed within their solid and lofty arches a fortified space, where Witiges established a camp of seven thousand Goths to intercept the convoys of Sicily and Campania. The granaries of Rome were insensibly exhausted, the adjacent country had been wasted with fire and sword; such scanty supplies as might yet be obtained by hasty excursions were the reward of valour and the purchase of wealth: the forage of the horses, and the bread of the soldiers, never failed; but in the last months of the siege, the people were exposed to the miseries of scarcity, unwholesome food, and contagious disorders.

Belisarius saw and pitied their sufferings; but he had foreseen, and he watched, the decay of their loyalty and the progress of their discontent. Adversity had awakened the Romans from the dreams of grandeur and freedom, and taught them the humiliating lesson, that it was of small moment to their real happiness, whether the name of their master was derived from the Gothic or the Latin language. The lieutenant of Justinian listened to their just complaints, but he rejected with disdain the idea of flight or capitulation; repressed their clamorous impatience for battle; amused them with the prospect of sure and speedy relief; and secured himself and the city from the effects of their despair or treachery. Twice in each month he changed the station of the officers to whom the custody of the gates was committed: the various precautions of patrols, watchwords, lights, and music, were repeatedly employed to discover whatever passed on the ramparts; out-guards were posted beyond the ditch, and the trusty vigilance of dogs supplied the more doubtful fidelity of mankind.

### THE POPE DEPOSED

A letter was intercepted, which assured the king of the Goths that the Asinarian gate, adjoining to the Lateran church, should be secretly opened to his troops. On the proof or suspicion of treason, several senators were banished, and the pope Silverius was summoned to attend the representative of his sovereign, at his headquarters in the Pincian palace. The conqueror of Rome and Carthage was modestly seated at the feet of Antonina, who

reclined on a stately couch: the general was silent, but the voice of reproach and menace issued from the mouth of his imperious wife. Accused by credible witnesses, and the evidence of his own subscription, the successor of St. Peter was despoiled of his pontifical ornaments, clad in the mean habit of a monk, and embarked, without delay, for a distant exile in the East. [According to Hodgkin[c] his "contemporaries seem to have entirely acquitted him in the matter," and "posterity reverenced him as a martyr."]

As Justinian was ambitious of fame, he made some efforts, though they were feeble and languid, to support and rescue his victorious general. A reinforcement of sixteen hundred Slavonians and Huns was led by Martin and Valerian; and as they had reposed during the winter season in the harbours of Greece, the strength of the men and horses was not impaired by the fatigues of a sea voyage; and they distinguished their valour in the first sally against the besiegers. About the time of the summer solstice, Euthalius landed at Tarracina with large sums of money for the payment of the troops; he cautiously proceeded along the Appian way, and this convoy entered Rome through the gate Capena, while Belisarius, on the other side, diverted the attention of the Goths by a vigorous and successful skirmish. These seasonable aids, the use and reputation of which were dexterously managed by the Roman general, revived the courage, or at least the hopes, of the soldiers and people. The historian Procopius was despatched with an important commission to collect the troops and provisions which Campania could furnish, or Constantinople had sent; and the secretary of Belisarius was soon followed by Antonina herself, who boldly traversed the posts of the enemy, and returned with the oriental succours to the relief of her husband and the besieged city. A fleet of three thousand Isaurians cast anchor in the bay of Naples, and afterwards at Ostia. Above two thousand horse, of whom a part were Thracians, landed at Tarentum; and, after the junction of five hundred soldiers of Campania, and a train of wagons laden with wine and flour, they directed their march, on the Appian way, from Capua to the neighbourhood of Rome. The forces that arrived by land and sea were united at the mouth of the Tiber.

### A THREE MONTHS' TRUCE (537-538 A.D.)

Antonina convened a council of war: it was resolved to surmount, with sails and oars, the adverse stream of the river; and the Goths were apprehensive of disturbing, by any rash hostilities, the negotiation to which Belisarius had craftily listened. They credulously believed that they saw no more than the vanguard of a fleet and army, which already covered the Ionian sea and the plains of Campania; and the illusion was supported by the haughty language of the Roman general, when he gave audience to the ambassadors of Witiges. After a specious discourse to vindicate the justice of his cause, they declared that, for the sake of peace, they were disposed to renounce the possession of Sicily. "The emperor is not less generous;" replied his lieutenant with a disdainful smile; "in return for a gift which you no longer possess, he presents you with an ancient province of the empire — he resigns to the Goths the sovereignty of the British island;" Belisarius rejected with equal firmness and contempt the offer of a tribute; but he allowed the Gothic ambassadors to seek their fate from the mouth of Justinian himself; and consented, with seeming reluctance, to a truce of three months, from the winter solstice to the equinox of spring. Prudence

[538 A.D.]

might not safely trust either the oaths or hostages of the barbarians, but the conscious superiority of the Roman chief was expressed in the distribution of his troops.

When fear or hunger led the Goths to evacuate Alba, Porto, and Centumcellæ (Civita Vecchia), their place was soon supplied; the garrisons of Narni, Spoleto, and Perusia were reinforced, and the seven camps of the besiegers were gradually encompassed with the calamities of a siege. The prayers and pilgrimage of Datius, bishop of Milan, were not without effect; and he obtained one thousand Thracians and Isaurians to assist the revolt of Liguria against her Arian tyrant. At the same time, John the Sanguinary, the nephew of Vitalian, was detached with two thousand chosen horse, first to Alba on the Fucine Lake, and afterwards to the frontiers of Picenum on the Adriatic Sea. "In that province," said Belisarius, "the Goths have deposited their families and treasures, without a guard or suspicion of danger. Doubtless they will violate the truce; let them feel your presence, before they hear of your motions. Spare the Italians; suffer not any fortified places to remain hostile in your rear; and faithfully reserve the spoil for an equal and common partition. It would not be reasonable," he added, with a laugh, "that whilst we are toiling to the destruction of the drones, our more fortunate brethren should rifle and enjoy the honey."

### LAST EFFORTS OF THE GOTHS (538 A.D.)

The whole nation of the Ostrogoths had been assembled for the attack, and was almost entirely consumed in the siege, of Rome. If any credit be due to an intelligent spectator, one-third at least of their enormous host was destroyed, in frequent and bloody combats under the walls of the city. The bad fame and pernicious qualities of the summer air might already be imputed to the decay of agriculture and population; and the evils of famine and pestilence were aggravated by their own licentiousness, and the unfriendly disposition of the country. While Witiges struggled with his fortune; while he hesitated between shame and ruin; his retreat was hastened by domestic alarms. The king of the Goths was informed by messengers, that John the Sanguinary spread the devastations of war from the Apennine to the Adriatic; that the rich spoils and innumerable captives of Picenum were lodged in the fortifications of Rimini (Ariminum); and that this formidable chief had defeated his uncle, insulted his capital, and seduced, by secret correspondence, the fidelity of his wife, the imperious daughter of Amalasuntha. Yet, before he retired, Witiges made a last effort either to storm or to surprise the city. A secret passage was discovered by one of the aqueducts; two citizens of the Vatican were tempted by bribes to intoxicate the guards of the Aurelian gate; an attack was meditated on the walls beyond the Tiber in a place which was not fortified with towers; and the barbarians advanced with torches and scaling-ladders to the assault of the Pincian gate. But every attempt was defeated by the intrepid vigilance of Belisarius and his band of veterans, who, in the most perilous moments, did not regret the absence of their companions; and the Goths, alike destitute of hope and subsistence, clamorously urged their departure, before the truce should expire, and the Roman cavalry should again be united.

One year and nine days after the commencement of the siege, an army, so lately strong and triumphant, burned their tents, and tumultuously repassed the Milvian bridge. They repassed not with impunity: their thronging

multitudes, oppressed in a narrow passage, were driven headlong into the Tiber by their own fears and the pursuit of the enemy; and the Roman general, sallying from the Pincian gate, inflicted a severe and disgraceful wound on their retreat. The slow length of a sickly and desponding host was heavily dragged along the Flaminian way; from whence the barbarians were sometimes compelled to deviate, lest they should encounter the hostile garrisons that guarded the highroad to Rimini and Ravenna. Yet so powerful was this flying army, that Witiges spared ten thousand men for the defence of the cities which he was most solicitous to preserve, and detached his nephew Uraias, with an adequate force, for the chastisement of rebellious Milan.

At the head of his principal army, Uraias besieged Rimini, only thirty-three miles distant from the Gothic capital. A feeble rampart and a shallow ditch were maintained by the skill and valour of John the Sanguinary, who shared the danger and fatigue of the meanest soldier, and emulated, on a theatre less illustrious, the military virtues of his great commander. The towers and battering engines of the barbarians were rendered useless; their attacks were repulsed; and the tedious blockade, which reduced the garrison to the last extremity of hunger, afforded time for the union and march of the Roman forces. A fleet, which had surprised Ancona, sailed along the coast of the Adriatic, to the relief of the besieged city. The eunuch Narses landed in Picenum with two thousand Heruli and five thousand of the bravest troops of the East. The rock of the Apennine was forced; ten thousand veterans moved round the foot of the mountains, under the command of Belisarius himself; and a new army, whose encampment blazed with innumerable lights, appeared to advance along the Flaminian way. Overwhelmed with astonishment and despair, the Goths abandoned the siege of Rimini, their tents, their standards, and their leaders; and Witiges, who gave or followed the example of flight, never halted till he found a shelter within the walls and morasses of Ravenna.

### JEALOUSY OF THE ROMAN GENERALS

To these walls, and to some fortresses destitute of any mutual support, the Gothic monarchy was now reduced. The provinces of Italy had embraced the party of the emperor; and his army, gradually recruited to the number of twenty thousand men, must have achieved an easy and rapid conquest, if their invincible powers had not been weakened by the discord of the Roman chiefs. In the confidence of approaching victory, they instigated a powerful rival to oppose the conqueror of Rome and Africa. From the domestic service of the palace, and the administration of the private revenue, Narses the eunuch was suddenly exalted to the head of an army; and the spirit of a hero, who afterwards equalled the merit and glory of Belisarius, served only to perplex the operations of the Gothic war. To his prudent counsels, the relief of Rimini was ascribed by the leaders of the discontented faction, who exhorted Narses to assume an independent and separate command. The epistle of Justinian had indeed enjoined his obedience to the general; but the dangerous exception, as far as may be advantageous to the public service, reserved some freedom of judgment to the discreet favourite, who had so lately departed from the sacred and familiar conversation of his sovereign. In the exercise of this doubtful right, the eunuch perpetually dissented from the opinions of Belisarius; and, after yielding with reluc-

[538–539 A.D.]

tance to the siege of Urbino, he deserted his colleague in the night, and marched away to the conquest of the Æmilian province.

The fierce and formidable bands of the Heruli were attached to the person of Narses; ten thousand Romans and confederates were persuaded to march under his banners; every malcontent embraced the fair opportunity of revenging his private or imaginary wrongs; and the remaining troops of Belisarius were divided and dispersed from the garrisons of Sicily to the shores of the Adriatic. His skill and perseverance overcame every obstacle: Urbino was taken; the sieges of Fæsulæ (Urbs Vetus), Orvieto (Fiesole), and Auximum (Osmio), were vigorously prosecuted; and the eunuch Narses was recalled to the domestic cares of the palace. All dissensions were healed, and all opposition was subdued, by the temperate authority of the Roman general, to whom his enemies could not refuse their esteem; and Belisarius inculcated the salutary lesson that the forces of the state should compose one body, and be animated by one soul. But, in the interval of discord, the Goths were permitted to breathe; an important season was lost, Milan was destroyed, and the northern provinces of Italy were afflicted by an inundation of the Franks.

COSTUME OF A GOTHIC WOMAN

### A FRANKISH INVASION (539 A.D.)

When Justinian first meditated the conquest of Italy, he sent ambassadors to the kings of the Franks, and adjured them, by the common ties of alliance and religion, to join in the holy enterprise against the Arians. The Goths, as their wants were more urgent, employed a more effectual mode of persuasion, and vainly strove, by the gift of lands and money, to purchase the friendship, or at least the neutrality, of a light and perfidious nation. But the arms of Belisarius, and the revolt of the Italians, had no sooner shaken the Gothic monarchy, than Theudebert of Austrasia, the most powerful and warlike of the Merovingian kings, was persuaded to succour their distress by an indirect and seasonable aid. Without expecting the consent of their sovereign, ten thousand Burgundians, his recent subjects, descended from the Alps, and joined the troops which Witiges had sent to chastise the revolt of Milan. After an obstinate siege, the capital of Liguria was reduced by famine, but no capitulation could be obtained, except for the safe retreat of the Roman garrison. Datius, the orthodox bishop, who had seduced his countrymen to rebellion and ruin, escaped to the luxury and honours of the Byzantine court, but the clergy, perhaps the Arian clergy, were slaughtered at the foot of their own altars by the defenders of the Catholic faith. Three hundred thousand males were reported to be slain; the female sex, and the more precious spoil, was resigned to the Burgundians; and the houses, or at

least the walls of Milan, were levelled with the ground. The Goths, in their last moments, were revenged by the destruction of a city second only to Rome in size and opulence, in the splendour of its buildings, or the number of its inhabitants; and Belisarius sympathised alone in the fate of his deserted and devoted friends.

Encouraged by this successful inroad, Theudebert himself, in the ensuing spring, invaded the plains of Italy with an army of one hundred thousand barbarians. The king, and some chosen followers, were mounted on horseback, and armed with lances; the infantry, without bows or spears, were satisfied with a shield, a sword, and a double-edged battle-axe, which, in their hands, became a deadly and unerring weapon. Italy trembled at the march of the Franks; and both the Gothic prince and the Roman general, alike ignorant of their designs, solicited, with hope and terror, the friendship of these dangerous allies.

Till he had secured the passage of the Po on the bridge of Pavia, the grandson of Clovis dissembled his intentions, which he at length declared, by assaulting, almost at the same instant, the hostile camps of the Romans and Goths. Instead of uniting their arms, they fled with equal precipitation; and the fertile, though desolate, provinces of Liguria and Æmilia, were abandoned to a licentious host of barbarians, whose rage was not mitigated by any thoughts of settlement or conquest. Among the cities which they ruined, Genoa, not yet constructed of marble, is particularly enumerated; and the deaths of thousands, according to the regular practice of war, appear to have excited less horror than some idolatrous sacrifices of women and children, which were performed with impunity in the camp of the most Christian king.

If it were not a melancholy truth that the first and most cruel sufferings must be the lot of the innocent and helpless, history might exult in the misery of the conquerors, who, in the midst of riches, were left destitute of bread or wine, reduced to drink the waters of the Po, and to feed on the flesh of distempered cattle. The dysentery swept away one-third of their army; and the clamours of his subjects, who were impatient to pass the Alps, disposed Theudebert to listen with respect to the mild exhortations of Belisarius. The memory of this inglorious and destructive warfare was perpetuated on the medals of Gaul: and Justinian, without unsheathing his sword, assumed the title of conqueror of the Franks. The Merovingian prince was offended by the vanity of the emperor; he affected to pity the fallen fortunes of the Goths; and his insidious offer of a federal union was fortified by the promise or menace of descending from the Alps at the head of five hundred thousand men. His plans of conquest were boundless, and perhaps chimerical. The king of Austrasia threatened to chastise Justinian, and to march to the gates of Constantinople; he was overthrown and slain by a wild bull as he hunted in the Belgic or German forests.

As soon as Belisarius was delivered from his foreign and domestic enemies, he seriously applied his forces to the final reduction of Italy. In the siege of Osimo, the general was nearly transpierced with an arrow, if the mortal stroke had not been intercepted by one of his guards, who lost, in that pious office, the use of his hand. The Goths of Osimo, four thousand warriors, with those of Fiesole and the Cottian Alps, were among the last who maintained their independence; and their gallant resistance, which almost tired the patience, deserved the esteem of the conqueror. His prudence refused to subscribe the safe conduct which they asked, to join their

[539-540 A.D.]

brethren of Ravenna; but they saved, by an honourable capitulation, one moiety at least of their wealth, with the free alternative of retiring peaceably to their estates, or enlisting to serve the emperor in his Persian wars.

### THE TEST OF BELISARIUS' FIDELITY

The multitudes which yet adhered to the standard of Witiges far surpassed the number of the Roman troops; but neither prayers, nor defiance, nor the extreme danger of his most faithful subjects, could tempt the Gothic king beyond the fortifications of Ravenna. These fortifications were, indeed, impregnable to the assaults of art or violence; and when Belisarius invested the capital he was soon convinced that famine only could tame the stubborn spirit of the barbarians. The sea, the land, and the channels of the Po, were guarded by the vigilance of the Roman general; and his morality extended the rights of war to the practice of poisoning the waters, and secretly firing the granaries of a besieged city. While he pressed the blockade of Ravenna, he was surprised by the arrival of two ambassadors from Constantinople, with a treaty of peace, which Justinian had imprudently signed, without deigning to consult the author of his victory. By this disgraceful and precarious agreement, Italy and the Gothic treasure were divided, and the provinces beyond the Po were left with the regal title to the successor of Theodoric. The ambassadors were eager to accomplish their salutary commission; the captive Witiges accepted, with transport, the unexpected offer of a crown; honour was less prevalent among the Goths than the want and appetite of food; and the Roman chiefs, who murmured at the continuance of the war, professed implicit submission to the commands of the emperor.

If Belisarius, at this moment, had possessed only the courage of a soldier, the laurel would have been snatched from his hand by timid and envious counsels; but, in this decisive moment, he resolved, with the magnanimity of a statesman, to sustain alone the danger and merit of generous disobedience. Each of his officers gave a written opinion, that the siege of Ravenna was impracticable and hopeless; the general then rejected the treaty of partition, and declared his own resolution of leading Witiges in chains to the feet of Justinian. The Goths retired with doubt and dismay; this peremptory refusal deprived them of the only signature which they could trust, and filled their minds with the just apprehension that a sagacious enemy had discovered the full extent of their deplorable state. They compared the fame and fortune of Belisarius with the weakness of their ill-fated king; and the comparison suggested an extraordinary project, to which Witiges, with apparent resignation, was compelled to acquiesce. Partition would ruin the strength, exile would disgrace the honour, of the nation; but they offered their arms, their treasures, and the fortifications of Ravenna, if Belisarius would disclaim the authority of a master, accept the choice of the Goths, and assume, as he had deserved, the kingdom of Italy. If the false lustre of a diadem could have tempted the loyalty of a faithful subject, his prudence must have foreseen the inconstancy of the barbarians, and his rational ambition would prefer the safe and honourable station of a Roman general. Even the patience and seeming satisfaction with which he entertained a proposal of treason, might be susceptible of a malignant interpretation. But the lieutenant of Justinian was conscious of his own rectitude: he entered into a dark and crooked path, as it might

lead to the voluntary submission of the Goths; and his dexterous policy persuaded them that he was disposed to comply with their wishes, without engaging an oath or a promise for the performance of a treaty which he secretly abhorred.

The day of the surrender of Ravenna was stipulated by the Gothic ambassadors: a fleet, laden with provisions, sailed as a welcome guest into the deepest recess of the harbour: the gates were opened to the fancied king of Italy; and Belisarius, without meeting an enemy, triumphantly marched through the streets of an impregnable city. The Romans were astonished by their success; the multitudes of tall and robust barbarians were confounded by the image of their own patience; and the masculine females, spitting in the faces of their sons and husbands, most bitterly reproached them for betraying their dominion and freedom to these pygmies of the south, contemptible in their numbers, diminutive in their stature. Before the Goths could recover from their first surprise, and claim the accomplishment of their doubtful hopes, the victor established his power in Ravenna, beyond the danger of repentance and revolt. Witiges, who perhaps had attempted to escape, was honourably guarded in his palace (540).[a]

He was soon taken with many of his comrades to Constantinople whither the victorious Belisarius went for his triumph, and met as the reward of his inexpugnable loyalty to Justinian the refusal of a triumph, though the people cheered him in the streets and marvelled at the giants whom he had conquered by sword and stratagem.[a]

## THE RISE OF TOTILA

The jealousy of the Byzantine court had not permitted Belisarius to finish the conquest of Italy; and his abrupt departure revived the courage of the Goths, who respected his genius, his virtue, and even the laudable motive which had urged the servant of Justinian to deceive and reject them. They had lost their king (an inconsiderable loss), their capital, their treasures, the provinces from Sicily to the Alps, and the military force of two hundred thousand barbarians, magnificently equipped with horses and arms. Yet all was not lost, as long as Pavia was defended by one thousand Goths, inspired by a sense of honour, the love of freedom, and the memory of their past greatness. The supreme command was unanimously offered to the brave Uraias; and it was in his eyes alone that the disgrace of his uncle Witiges could appear as a reason of exclusion. His voice inclined the election in favour of Hildibald, whose personal merit was recommended by the vain hope that his kinsman Theudes, the Spanish monarch, would support the common interest of the Gothic nation. The success of his arms in Liguria and Venetia seemed to justify their choice; but he soon declared to the world, that he was incapable of forgiving or commanding his benefactor. The consort of Hildibald was deeply wounded by the beauty, the riches, and the pride of the wife of Uraias; and the death of that virtuous patriot excited the indignation of a free people. A bold assassin executed their sentence by striking off the head of Hildibald in the midst of a banquet; the Rugians, a foreign tribe, assumed the privilege of election;[1] and Totila, the nephew of the late king, was tempted by revenge, to deliver himself and the garrison of Treviso (Tarvisium) into the hands of the Romans.

[1 This king, Eraric, reigned only five months.]

[541-542 A.D.]

But the gallant and accomplished youth was easily persuaded to prefer the Gothic throne before the service of Justinian; and as soon as the palace of Pavia had been purified from the Rugian usurper, he reviewed the national force of five thousand soldiers, and generously undertook the restoration of the kingdom of Italy.

The successors of Belisarius, eleven generals of equal rank, neglected to crush the feeble and disunited Goths, till they were roused to action by the progress of Totila and the reproaches of Justinian. The gates of Verona were secretly opened to Artabazus, at the head of one hundred Persians in the service of the empire (542). The Goths fled from the city. At the distance of sixty furlongs the Roman generals halted to regulate the division of the spoil. While they disputed, the enemy discovered the real number of the victors: the Persians were instantly overpowered, and it was by leaping from the wall that Artabazus preserved a life which he lost in a few days by the lance of a barbarian, who had defied him to single combat. Twenty thousand Romans encountered the forces of Totila, near Faenza, and on the hills of Mugello, of the Florentine territory. The ardour of freedmen, who fought to regain their country, was opposed to the languid temper of mercenary troops, who were even destitute of the merits of strong and well-disciplined servitude. On the first attack they abandoned their ensigns, threw down their arms, and dispersed on all sides with an active speed, which abated the loss, whilst it aggravated the shame, of their defeat.

The king of the Goths, who blushed for the baseness of his enemies, pursued with rapid steps the path of honour and victory. Totila passed the Po, traversed the Apennine, suspended the important conquest of Ravenna, Florence, and Rome, and marched through the heart of Italy, to form the siege, or rather the blockade, of Naples. The Roman chiefs, imprisoned in their respective cities, and accusing each other of the common disgrace, did not presume to disturb his enterprise. But the emperor, alarmed by the distress and danger of his Italian conquests, despatched to the relief of Naples a fleet of galleys and a body of Thracian and Armenian soldiers. They landed in Sicily, which yielded its copious stores of provisions; but the delays of the new commander, an unwarlike magistrate, protracted the sufferings of the besieged; and the succours, which he dropped with a timid and tardy hand, were successively intercepted by the armed vessels stationed by Totila in the bay of Naples. The principal officer of the Romans was dragged, with a rope round his neck, to the foot of the wall, from whence, with a trembling voice, he exhorted the citizens to implore, like himself, the mercy of the conqueror. They requested a truce, with a promise of surrendering the city, if no effectual relief should appear at the end of thirty days. Instead of one month, the audacious barbarian granted them three, in the just confidence that famine would anticipate the term of their capitulation. After the reduction of Naples and Cumæ, the provinces of Lucania, Apulia, and Calabria, submitted to the king of the Goths (543). Totila led his army to the gates of Rome, pitched his camp at Tibur, or Tivoli, within twenty miles of the capital, and calmly exhorted the senate and people to compare the tyranny of the Greeks with the blessings of the Gothic reign.

The rapid success of Totila may be partly ascribed to the revolution which three years' experience had produced in the sentiments of the Italians. At the command, or at least in the name, of a Catholic emperor, the pope, their spiritual father, had been torn from the Roman church, and either

starved or murdered on a desolate island. The virtues of Belisarius were replaced by the various or uniform vices of eleven chiefs, at Rome, Ravenna, Florence, Perugia, Spoleto, etc., who abused their authority for the indulgence of lust and avarice. The subjects of Justinian who escaped these partial vexations, were oppressed by the irregular maintenance of the soldiers who were both defrauded and despised; and their hasty sallies, in quest of wealth or subsistence, provoked the inhabitants of the country to await or implore their deliverance from the virtues of a barbarian. Totila was chaste and temperate; and none were deceived, either friends or enemies, who depended on his faith or his clemency. To the husbandmen of Italy the Gothic king issued a welcome proclamation, enjoining them to pursue their important labours, and to rest assured, that, on the payment of the ordinary taxes, they should be defended by his valour and discipline from the injuries of war. The strong towns he successively attacked; and as soon as they had yielded to his arms, he demolished the fortifications; to save the people from the calamities of a future siege, to deprive the Romans of the arts of defence, and to decide the tedious quarrel of the two nations, by an equal and honourable conflict in the field of battle.

The Roman captives and deserters were tempted to enlist in the service of a liberal and courteous adversary; the slaves were attracted by the firm and faithful promise, that they should never be delivered to their masters; and from the thousand warriors of Pavia, a new people, under the same appellation of Goths, was insensibly formed in the camp of Totila. He sincerely accomplished the articles of capitulation, without seeking or accepting any sinister advantage from ambiguous expressions or unforeseen events: the garrison of Naples had stipulated that they should be transported by sea; the obstinacy of the winds prevented their voyage, but they were generously supplied with horses, provisions, and a safe conduct to the gates of Rome. The wives of the senators, who had been surprised in the villas of Campania, were restored, without a ransom, to their husbands; the violation of female chastity was inexorably chastised with death; and in the salutary regulation of the diet of the famished Neapolitans, the conqueror assumed the office of a humane and attentive physician. The virtues of Totila are equally laudable, whether they proceeded from true policy, religious principle, or the instinct of humanity; he often harangued his troops; and it was his constant theme, that national vice and ruin are inseparably connected; that victory is the fruit of moral as well as military virtue; and that the prince, and even the people, are responsible for the crimes which they neglect to punish.

### BELISARIUS AGAIN IN ITALY

The return of Belisarius, to save the country which he had subdued, was pressed with equal vehemence by his friends and enemies; and the Gothic war was imposed as a trust or an exile on the veteran commander. A hero on the banks of the Euphrates, a slave in the palace of Constantinople, he accepted, with reluctance, the painful task of supporting his own reputation, and retrieving the faults of his successors. The sea was open to the Romans; the ships and soldiers were assembled at Salona, near the palace of Diocletian; he refreshed and reviewed his troops at Pola in Istria, coasted round the head of the Adriatic, entered the port of Ravenna, and despatched orders rather than supplies to the subordinate cities. Not a man was tempted to desert the standard of the Gothic king.

[544 A.D.]

Belisarius soon discovered that he was sent to remain the idle and impotent spectator of the glory of a young barbarian; and his own epistle[1] exhibits a genuine and lively picture of the distress of a noble mind: "Most excellent prince; we are arrived in Italy, destitute of all the necessary implements of war, men, horses, arms, and money. In our late circuit through the villages of Thrace and Illyricum, we have collected, with extreme difficulty, about four thousand recruits, naked and unskilled in the use of weapons and the exercises of the camp. The soldiers already stationed in the province are discontented, fearful, and dismayed; at the sound of an enemy, they dismiss their horses, and cast their arms on the ground. No taxes can be raised, since Italy is in the hands of the barbarians; the failure of payment has deprived us of the right of command, or even of admonition. Be assured, dread sir, that the greater part of your troops have already deserted to the Goths. If the war could be achieved by the presence of Belisarius alone, your wishes are satisfied; Belisarius is in the midst of Italy. But if you desire to conquer, far other preparations are requisite; without a military force, the title of general is an empty name. It would be expedient to restore to my service my own veterans and domestic guards. Before I can take the field, I must receive an adequate supply of light and heavy armed troops; and it is only with ready money that you can procure the indispensable aid of a powerful body of the cavalry of the Huns."

An officer in whom Belisarius confided was sent from Ravenna to hasten and conduct the succours; but the message was neglected, and the messenger was detained at Constantinople by an advantageous marriage. After his patience had been exhausted by delay and disappointment, the Roman general repassed the Adriatic, and expected at Dyrrhachium the arrival of the troops, which were slowly assembled among the subjects and allies of the empire. His powers were still inadequate to the deliverance of Rome, which was closely besieged by the Gothic king. The Appian way, a march of forty days, was covered by the barbarians; and as the prudence of Belisarius declined a battle, he preferred the safe and speedy navigation of five days from the coast of Epirus to the mouth of the Tiber.

### SECOND SIEGE OF ROME (MAY, 544–DECEMBER, 545 A.D.)

After reducing, by force or treaty, the towns of inferior note in the midland provinces of Italy, Totila proceeded, not to assault, but to encompass and starve, the ancient capital. Rome was afflicted by the avarice, and guarded by the valour, of Bessas, a veteran chief of Gothic extraction, who filled, with a garrison of three thousand soldiers, the spacious circle of her venerable walls. From the distress of the people he extracted a profitable trade, and secretly rejoiced in the continuance of the siege. It was for his use that the granaries had been replenished; the charity of Pope Vigilius had purchased and embarked an ample supply of Sicilian corn; but the vessels which escaped the barbarians were seized by a rapacious governor, who imparted a scanty sustenance to the soldiers, and sold the remainder to the wealthy Romans. The medimnus, or fifth part of the quarter of wheat, was exchanged for seven pieces of gold; fifty pieces were given for an ox, a rare and accidental prize; the progress of famine enhanced this exorbitant

[1 It is quoted by Procopius.]

value, and the mercenaries were tempted to deprive themselves of the allowance, which was scarcely sufficient for the support of life. A tasteless and unwholesome mixture, in which the bran thrice exceeded the quantity of flour, appeased the hunger of the poor; they were gradually reduced to feed on dead horses, dogs, cats, and mice, and eagerly to snatch the grass, and even the nettles, which grew among the ruins of the city.

A crowd of spectres, pale and emaciated, their bodies oppressed with disease, and their minds with despair, surrounded the palace of the governor, urged, with unavailing truth, that it was the duty of a master to maintain his slaves, and humbly requested that he would provide for their subsistence, permit their flight, or command their immediate execution. Bessas replied, with unfeeling tranquillity, that it was impossible to feed, unsafe to dismiss, and unlawful to kill, the subjects of the emperor. Yet the example of a private citizen might have shown his countrymen, that a tyrant cannot withhold the privilege of death. Pierced by the cries of five children, who vainly called on their father for bread, he ordered them to follow his steps, advanced with calm and silent despair to one of the bridges of the Tiber, and covering his face, threw himself headlong into the stream, in the presence of his family and the Roman people. To the rich and pusillanimous, Bessas sold the permission of departure; but the greatest part of the fugitives expired on the public highways, or were intercepted by the flying parties of barbarians. In the meanwhile, the artful governor soothed the discontent, and revived the hopes, of the Romans, by the vague reports of the fleets and armies which were hastening to their relief from the extremities of the East. They derived more rational comfort from the assurance that Belisarius had landed at the port; and, without numbering his forces, they firmly relied on the humanity, the courage, and the skill of their great deliverer.

The foresight of Totila had raised obstacles worthy of such an antagonist. Ninety furlongs below the city, in the narrowest part of the river, he joined the two banks by strong and solid timbers in the form of a bridge; on which he erected two lofty towers, manned by the bravest of his Goths, and profusely stored with missile weapons and engines of offence. The approach of the bridge and towers was covered by a strong and massy chain of iron; and the chain, at either end, on the opposite sides of the Tiber, was defended by a numerous and chosen detachment of archers. But the enterprise of forcing these barriers, and relieving the capital, displays a shining example of the boldness and conduct of Belisarius. His cavalry advanced from the port along the public road, to awe the motions and distract the attention of the enemy. His infantry and provisions were distributed in two hundred large boats; and each boat was shielded by a high rampart of thick planks, pierced with many small holes for the discharge of missile weapons. In the front, two large vessels were linked together to sustain a floating castle, which commanded the towers of the bridge, and contained a magazine of fire, sulphur, and bitumen. The whole fleet, which the general led in person, was laboriously moved against the current of the river. The chain yielded to their weight, and the enemies who guarded the banks were either slain or scattered. As soon as they touched the principal barrier, the fire-ship was instantly grappled to the bridge; one of the towers, with two hundred Goths, was consumed by the flames; the assailants shouted the victory; and Rome was saved, if the wisdom of Belisarius had not been defeated by the misconduct of his officers. He had previously sent orders to Bessas to second his operations by a timely sally from the town; and he had fixed his lieutenant, Isaac, by a peremptory command, to the station of the port. But avarice

[545–546 A.D.]

rendered Bessas immovable; while the youthful ardour of Isaac delivered him into the hands of a superior enemy.

The exaggerated rumour of his defeat was hastily carried to the ears of Belisarius: he paused; betrayed in that single moment of his life some emotions of surprise and perplexity; and reluctantly sounded a retreat to save his wife Antonina, his treasures, and the only harbour which he possessed on the Tuscan coast. The vexation of his mind produced an ardent and almost mortal fever; and Rome was left without protection to the mercy or indignation of Totila. The continuance of hostilities had embittered the national hatred; the Arian clergy was ignominiously driven from Rome; Pelagius, the archdeacon, returned without success from an embassy to the Gothic camp; and a Sicilian bishop, the envoy or nuncio of the pope, was deprived of both his hands, for daring to utter falsehoods in the service of the church and state.

A Gothic Officer

### TOTILA CAPTURES ROME (546 A.D.)

Famine had relaxed the strength and discipline of the garrison of Rome. They could derive no effectual service from a dying people; and the inhuman avarice of the merchant at length absorbed the vigilance of the governor. Four Isaurian sentinels unbarred the Asinarian gate, and gave admittance to the Goths. Till the dawn of day they halted in order of battle, apprehensive of treachery or ambush; but the troops of Bessas, with their leader, had already escaped; and when the king was pressed to disturb their retreat, he prudently replied, that no sight could be more grateful than that of a flying enemy. The patricians, who were still possessed of horses, Decius, Basilius, etc., accompanied the governor; their brethren, among whom Olybrius, Orestes, and Maximus are named by the historian, took refuge in the church of St. Peter; but the assertion, that only five hundred persons remained in the capital, inspires some doubt of the fidelity either of his narrative or of his text.[1] As soon as daylight had displayed the entire victory of the Goths, their monarch devoutly visited the tomb of the prince of the apostles; but while he prayed at the altar, twenty-five soldiers and sixty citizens were put to the sword in the vestibule of the temple. The lives of the Romans were spared; and the chastity of the maids and matrons was preserved inviolate from the passions of the hungry soldiers. But they were rewarded by the freedom of pillage, after the most precious spoils had been reserved for the royal treasury. The houses of the senators were plentifully stored with gold and silver; and the avarice of Bessas had laboured with so much guilt and shame for the benefit of the conqueror. In this revolution, the sons and daughters of Roman consuls tasted the misery which they had spurned or

[1 Hodgkin thinks that there is no necessity for doubting the statement that only five hundred people remained.]

relieved, wandered in tattered garments through the streets of the city, and begged their bread, perhaps without success, before the gates of their hereditary mansions.

Totila pronounced two orations, to congratulate and admonish his victorious Goths, and to reproach the senate, as the vilest of slaves, with their perjury, folly, and ingratitude; sternly declaring, that their estates and honours were justly forfeited to the companions of his arms. Yet he consented to forgive their revolt, and the senators repaid his clemency by despatching circular letters to their tenants and vassals in the provinces of Italy, strictly to enjoin them to desert the standard of the Greeks, to cultivate their lands in peace, and to learn from their masters the duty of obedience to a Gothic sovereign. Against the city which had so long delayed the course of his victories, he appeared inexorable: one-third of the walls, in different parts, were demolished by his command; fire and engines prepared to consume, or subvert, the most stately works of antiquity; and the world was astonished by the fatal decree, that Rome should be changed into a pasture for cattle. The firm and temperate remonstrance of Belisarius suspended the execution; he warned the barbarian not to sully his fame by the destruction of those monuments, which were the glory of the dead, and the delight of the living; and Totila was persuaded, by the advice of an enemy, to preserve Rome as the ornament of his kingdom, or the fairest pledge of peace and reconciliation. When he had signified to the ambassadors of Belisarius his intention of sparing the city, he stationed an army at the distance of 120 furlongs, to observe the motions of the Roman general. With the remainder of his forces, he marched into Lucania and Apulia, and occupied, on the summit of Mount Garganus, one of the camps of Hannibal. The senators were dragged in his train, and afterwards confined in the fortresses of Campania: the citizens, with their wives and children, were dispersed in exile; and during forty days Rome was abandoned to desolate and dreary solitude.

### BELISARIUS REMANTLES THE DESERTED CITY

The loss of Rome was speedily retrieved by an action, to which, according to the event, the public opinion would apply the names of rashness or heroism. After the departure of Totila, the Roman general sallied from the port at the head of a thousand horse, cut in pieces the enemy who opposed his progress, and visited with pity and reverence the vacant space of the Eternal City. Resolved to maintain a station so conspicuous in the eyes of mankind, he summoned the greatest part of his troops to the standard which he erected on the Capitol: the old inhabitants were recalled by the love of their country and the hopes of food; and the keys of Rome were sent a second time to the emperor Justinian. The walls, as far as they had been demolished by the Goths, were repaired with rude and dissimilar materials; the ditch was restored; iron spikes were profusely scattered in the highways to annoy the feet of the horses; and as new gates could not suddenly be procured, the entrance was guarded by a Spartan rampart of his bravest soldiers. At the expiration of twenty-five days, Totila returned by hasty marches from Apulia, to avenge the injury and disgrace. Belisarius expected his approach. The Goths were thrice repulsed in three general assaults; they lost the flower of their troops; the royal standard had almost fallen into the hands of the enemy, and the fame of Totila sank, as it had risen, with the fortune of his arms.

[547-549 A.D.]

Whatever skill and courage could achieve had been performed by the Roman general; it remained only that Justinian should terminate, by a strong and seasonable effort, the war which he had ambitiously undertaken. The indolence, perhaps the impotence, of a prince who despised his enemies and envied his servants, protracted the calamities of Italy. After a long silence, Belisarius was commanded to leave a sufficient garrison at Rome, and to transport himself into the province of Lucania, whose inhabitants, inflamed by Catholic zeal, had cast away the yoke of their Arian conquerors. In this ignoble warfare, the hero, invincible against the power of the barbarians, was basely vanquished by the delay, the disobedience, and the cowardice of his own officers. He reposed in his winter quarters of Crotona, in the full assurance that the two passes of the Lucanian hills were guarded by his cavalry. They were betrayed by treachery or weakness; and the rapid march of the Goths scarcely allowed time for the escape of Belisarius to the coast of Sicily. At length a fleet and army were assembled for the relief of Ruscianum, or Rossano, a fortress sixty furlongs from the ruins of Sybaris, where the nobles of Lucania had taken refuge. In the first attempt, the Roman forces were dissipated by a storm. In the second they approached the shore; but they saw the hills covered with archers, the landing-place defended by a line of spears, and the king of the Goths impatient for battle. The conqueror of Italy retired with a sigh, and continued to languish, inglorious and inactive, till Antonina, who had been sent to Constantinople to solicit succours, obtained, after the death of the empress, the permission of his return in 548.

The last five campaigns of Belisarius might abate the envy of his competitors, whose eyes had been dazzled and wounded by the blaze of his former glory. Instead of delivering Italy from the Goths, he had wandered like a fugitive along the coast, without daring to march into the country, or to accept the bold and repeated challenge of Totila. Yet in the judgment of the few who could discriminate counsels from events, and compare the instruments with the execution, he appeared a more consummate master of the art of war, than in the season of his prosperity, when he presented two captive kings before the throne of Justinian. The valour of Belisarius was not chilled by age; his prudence was matured by experience; but the moral virtues of humanity and justice seem to have yielded to the hard necessity of the times.

### TOTILA AGAIN TAKES ROME (549 A.D.)

Before the departure of Belisarius, Perugia was besieged, and few cities were impregnable to the Gothic arms. Ravenna, Ancona, and Crotona still resisted the barbarians; and when Totila asked in marriage one of the daughters of France, he was stung by the just reproach, that the king of Italy was unworthy of his title till it was acknowledged by the Roman people. Three thousand of the bravest soldiers had been left to defend the capital. On the suspicion of a monopoly, they massacred the governor, and announced to Justinian, by a deputation of the clergy, that unless their offence was pardoned, and their arrears were satisfied, they should instantly accept the tempting offers of Totila. But the officer, who succeeded to the command (his name was Diogenes), deserved their esteem and confidence; and the Goths, instead of finding an easy conquest, encountered a vigorous resistance from the soldiers and people, who patiently endured the loss of the port, and of all maritime supplies. The siege of Rome would perhaps

have been raised, if the liberality of Totila to the Isaurians had not encouraged some of their venal countrymen to copy the example of treason. In a dark night, while the Gothic trumpet sounded on another side, they silently opened the gate of St. Paul: the barbarians rushed into the city; and the flying garrison was intercepted before they could reach the harbour of Centumcellæ (Civita Vecchia).

Above four hundred enemies, who had taken refuge in the sanctuaries, were saved by the clemency of the victor. He no longer entertained a wish of destroying the edifices of Rome, which he now respected as the seat of the Gothic kingdom; the senate and people were restored to their country; the means of subsistence were liberally provided; and Totila, in the robe of peace, exhibited the equestrian games of the circus. Whilst he amused the eyes of the multitude, four hundred vessels were prepared for the embarkation of his troops. The cities of Rhegium and Tarentum were reduced; he passed into Sicily, the object of his implacable resentment, and the island was stripped of its gold and silver, of the fruits of the earth, and of an infinite number of horses, sheep, and oxen. Sardinia and Corsica obeyed the fortune of Italy; and the sea coast of Greece was visited by a fleet of three hundred galleys. The Goths were landed in Corcyra and the ancient continent of Epirus; they advanced as far as Nicopolis, the trophy of Augustus, and Dodona, once famous by the oracle of Jove. In every step of his victories the wise barbarian repeated to Justinian his desire of peace, applauded the concord of their predecessors, and offered to employ the Gothic arms in the service of the empire.

### NARSES RETURNS TO ITALY (551 A.D.)

Justinian was deaf to the voice of peace; but he neglected the prosecution of war; and the indolence of his temper disappointed, in some degree, the obstinacy of his passions. From this salutary slumber the emperor was awakened by the pope Vigilius and the patrician Cethegus, who appeared before his throne, and adjured him, in the name of God and the people, to resume the conquest and deliverance of Italy.[a]

At last Justinian acted and sent a fleet to Sicily's aid, under Artabanes, who was released from prison to command the ships; he recovered Sicily. On land Germanus was appointed to Belisarius' post. He had married the granddaughter of Theodoric, and great hopes were had of his expedition, but he died before striking a blow. Totila now ravaged the Grecian coast, 551, with three hundred ships, and besieged Ancona, but in a naval fight off Sinigaglia his fleet was defeated and he had to raise the siege of Ancona. Then came Narses.[a]

The nations were provoked to smile by the strange intelligence that the command of the Roman armies was given to an eunuch. But the eunuch Narses is ranked among the few who have rescued that unhappy name from the contempt and hatred of mankind. A feeble, diminutive body[1] concealed the soul of a statesman and a warrior. His youth had been employed in the management of the loom and distaff, in the cares of the household, and the service of female luxury; but while his hands were busy, he secretly exercised the faculties of a vigorous and discerning mind. A stranger to the schools and the camp, he studied in the palace to dissemble, to flatter, and

[1 According to Hodgkin [c] he was seventy-five years old at this time.]

to persuade; and as soon as he approached the person of the emperor, Justinian listened with surprise and pleasure to the manly counsels of his chamberlain and private treasurer. The talents of Narses were tried and improved in frequent embassies; he led an army into Italy, acquired a practical knowledge of the war and the country, and presumed to strive with the genius of Belisarius. Twelve years after his return, the eunuch was chosen to achieve the conquest which had been left imperfect by the first of the Roman generals. Instead of being dazzled by vanity or emulation, he seriously declared, that unless he were armed with an adequate force, he would never consent to risk his own glory and that of his sovereign. Justinian granted to the favourite, what he might have denied to the hero; the Gothic War was rekindled from its ashes, and the preparations were not unworthy of the ancient majesty of the empire.

The prudence of Narses impelled him to speedy and decisive action. His powers were the last effort of the state: the cost of each day accumulated the enormous account; and the nations, untrained to discipline or fatigue, might be rashly provoked to turn their arms against each other, or against their benefactor. The same considerations might have tempered the ardour of Totila. But he was conscious that the clergy and people of Italy aspired to a second revolution; he felt or suspected the rapid progress of treason, and he resolved to risk the Gothic kingdom on the chance of a day, in which the valiant would be animated by instant danger, and the disaffected might be awed by mutual ignorance. In his march from Ravenna, the Roman general chastised the garrison of Rimini, traversed in a direct line the hills of Urbino, and re-entered the Flaminian way, nine miles beyond the perforated rock, an obstacle of art and nature which might have stopped or retarded his progress. The Goths were assembled in the neighbourhood of Rome; they advanced, without delay, to seek a superior enemy; and the two armies approached each other at the distance of one hundred furlongs, between Taginæ and the sepulchres of the Gauls.[1] The haughty message of Narses was an offer, not of peace, but of pardon. The answer of the Gothic king declared his resolution to die or conquer. "What day (said the messenger) will you fix for the combat?" "The eighth day," replied Totila: but early the next morning he attempted to surprise a foe, suspicious of deceit, and prepared for battle.

### BATTLE OF TAGINÆ AND DEATH OF TOTILA (552 A.D.)

The first line of cavalry advanced with more courage than discretion, and left behind them the infantry of the second line. They were soon engaged between the horns of a crescent, into which the adverse wings had been insensibly curved, and were saluted from either side by the volleys of four thousand archers. Their ardour, and even their distress, drove them forwards to a close and unequal conflict, in which they could only use their lances against an enemy equally skilled in all the instruments of war. A generous emulation inspired the Romans and their barbarian allies; and Narses, who calmly viewed and directed their efforts, doubted to whom he should adjudge the prize of superior bravery. The Gothic cavalry was astonished and disordered, pressed and broken; and the line of infantry, instead of presenting their spears, or opening their intervals, were trampled

[1 Hodgkin, discrediting Procopius here for many reasons, places the battle near Scheggia.]

under the feet of the flying horse. Six thousand of the Goths were slaughtered, without mercy, in the field of Taginæ. Their prince, with five attendants, was overtaken by Asbad, of the race of the Gepids. "Spare the king of Italy," cried a loud voice, and Asbad struck his lance through the body of Totila. The blow was instantly revenged by the faithful Goths; they transported their dying monarch seven miles beyond the scene of his disgrace; and his last moments were not embittered by the presence of an enemy. Compassion afforded him the shelter of an obscure tomb; but the Romans were not satisfied of their victory, till they beheld the corpse of the Gothic king. His hat, enriched with gems, and his bloody robe, were presented to Justinian by the messengers of triumph.[d]

Commenting upon the character of Totila—and restoring to him his proper name of Baduila—Hodgkin[e] declares that this Teutonic hero must take precedence over even Theodoric himself as embodying all that was best in the Ostrogothic nation. He thinks that, had his life been associated with a victorious instead of with a decaying kingdom, Totila might then have held in popular regard "the same high place which Englishmen accord to Alfred, Frenchmen to Charlemagne, and Germans to the mighty Barbarossa"—a verdict which vividly suggests how large a share must be ascribed to mere fortune in determining the place ultimately held by any hero in history.[a]

A Gothic Warrior

### PROGRESS OF NARSES

The victorious eunuch pursued his march through Tuscany, accepted the submission of the Goths, heard the acclamations, and often the complaints, of the Italians, and encompassed the walls of Rome with the remainder of his formidable host. Neither the fortifications of Hadrian's mole, nor of the port, could long delay the progress of the conqueror; and Justinian once more received the keys of Rome, which, under his reign, had been five times taken and recovered. But the deliverance of Rome was the last calamity of the Roman people. The barbarian allies of Narses too frequently confounded the privileges of peace and war; the despair of the flying Goths found some consolation in sanguinary revenge; and three hundred youths of the noblest families, who had been sent as hostages beyond the Po, were inhumanly slain by the successor of Totila. The fate of the senate suggests an awful lesson of the vicissitude of human affairs. Of the senators whom Totila had banished from their country, some were rescued by an officer of Belisarius, and transported from Campania to Sicily; while others were too guilty to confide in the clemency of Justinian, or too poor to provide horses for their escape to the seashore. Their brethren languished five years in a state of indigence and exile: the victory of Narses revived their hopes; but their premature return to the metropolis was prevented by the furious Goths; and all the fortresses of Campania were stained with patrician blood. After a period

[552–553 A.D.]

of thirteen centuries, the institution of Romulus expired; and if the nobles of Rome still assumed the title of senators, few subsequent traces can be discovered of a public council, or constitutional order. Ascend six hundred years, and contemplate the kings of the earth soliciting an audience, as the slaves or freedmen of the Roman senate!

The Gothic War was yet alive. The bravest of the nation retired beyond the Po; and Teias was unanimously chosen to succeed and revenge their departed hero. The new king immediately sent ambassadors to implore, or rather to purchase, the aid of the Franks, and nobly lavished for the public safety the riches which had been deposited in the palace of Pavia. The residue of the royal treasure was guarded by his brother Aligern at Cumæ in Campania; but the strong castle which Totila had fortified, was closely besieged by the arms of Narses. From the Alps to the foot of Mount Vesuvius, the Gothic king, by rapid and secret marches, advanced to the relief of his brother, eluded the vigilance of the Roman chiefs, and pitched his camp on the banks of the Sarnus or Draco, which flows from Nuceria into the bay of Naples. The river separated the two armies; sixty days were consumed in distant and fruitless combats, and Teias maintained this important post, till he was deserted by his fleet and the hope of subsistence. With reluctant steps he ascended the Lactarian mount, where the physicians of Rome, since the time of Galen, had sent their patients for the benefit of the air and the milk. But the Goths soon embraced a more generous resolution—to descend the hill, to dismiss their horses, and to die in arms, and in the possession of freedom. The king marched at their head, bearing in his right hand a lance, and an ample buckler in his left: with the one he struck dead the foremost of the assailants; with the other he received the weapons which every hand was ambitious to aim against his life. After a combat of many hours, his left arm was fatigued by the weight of twelve javelins which hung from his shield. Without moving from his ground, or suspending his blows, the hero called aloud on his attendants for a fresh buckler, but in the moment, while his side was uncovered, it was pierced by a mortal dart. He fell, and his head, exalted on a spear, proclaimed to the nations, that the Gothic kingdom was no more.

But the example of his death served only to animate the companions who had sworn to perish with their leader. They fought till darkness descended on the earth. They reposed on their arms. The combat was renewed with the return of light, and maintained with unabated vigour till the evening of the second day. The repose of a second night, the want of water and the loss of their bravest champions, determined the surviving Goths to accept the fair capitulation which the prudence of Narses was inclined to propose. They embraced the alternative of residing in Italy as the subjects and soldiers of Justinian, or departing with a portion of their private wealth, in search of some independent country. Yet the oath of fidelity or exile was alike rejected by one thousand Goths, who broke away before the treaty was signed, and boldly effected their retreat to the walls of Pavia. The spirit, as well as the situation, of Aligern, prompted him to imitate rather than to bewail his brother; a strong and dexterous archer, he transpierced with a single arrow the armour and breast of his antagonist; and his military conduct defended Cumæ above a year against the forces of the Romans. Their industry had scooped the Sibyl's cave into a prodigious mine; combustible materials were introduced to consume the temporary props: the walls and gate of Cumæ sank into the cavern, but the ruins formed a deep and inaccessible precipice. On the fragments of a rock,

Aligern stood alone and unshaken, till he calmly surveyed the hopeless condition of his country, and judged it more honourable to be the friend of Narses than the slave of the Franks. After the death of Teias, the Roman general separated his troops to reduce the cities of Italy; Lucca sustained a long and vigorous siege: and such was the humanity or the prudence of Narses, that the repeated perfidy of the inhabitants could not provoke him to exact the forfeit lives of their hostages. These hostages were dismissed in safety, and their grateful zeal at length subdued the obstinacy of their countrymen.

### INTERFERENCE OF THE FRANKS

Before Lucca had surrendered, Italy was overwhelmed by a new deluge of barbarians. A feeble youth, the grandson of Clovis, reigned over the Austrasians or Oriental Franks. The guardians of Theudebald entertained with coldness and reluctance the magnificent promise of the Gothic ambassadors. But the spirit of a martial people outstripped the timid counsels of the court: two brothers, Leuthar[1] and Butilin, the dukes of the Alamanni, stood forth as the leaders of the Italian war; and seventy-five thousand Germans descended in the autumn from the Rætian Alps into the plain of Milan. The vanguard of the Roman army was stationed near the Po, under the conduct of Fulcaris [or Phulcaris] an Herulian, who conceived that personal bravery was the sole duty and merit of a commander. As he marched without order or precaution along the Æmilian way, an ambuscade of Franks suddenly rose from the amphitheatre of Parma: his troops were surprised and routed; but their leader refused to fly, declaring to the last moment that death was less terrible than the angry countenance of Narses. The death of Fulcaris, and the retreat of the surviving chiefs, decided the fluctuating and rebellious temper of the Goths; they flew to the standard of their deliverers, and admitted them into the cities which still resisted the arms of the Roman general. The conqueror of Italy opened a free passage to the irresistible torrent of barbarians. They passed under the walls of Cesena, and answered by threats and reproaches the advice of Aligern, that the Gothic treasures could no longer repay the labour of an invasion.

Two thousand Franks were destroyed by the skill of Narses who sallied from Rimini at the head of three hundred horse, to chastise the licentious rapine of their march. On the confines of Samnium the two brothers divided their forces. With the right wing, Butilin assumed the spoil of Campania, Lucania, and Bruttium: with the left, Leuthar accepted the plunder of Apulia and Calabria. They followed the coast of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, as far as Rhegium and Otranto, and the extreme lands of Italy were the term of their destructive progress. The Franks, who were Christians and Catholics, contented themselves with simple pillage and occasional murder. But the churches, which their piety had spared, were stripped by the sacrilegious hands of the Alamanni, who sacrificed horses' heads to their native deities of the woods and rivers: they melted or profaned the consecrated vessels, and the ruins of shrines and altars were stained with the blood of the faithful. Butilin was actuated by ambition, and Leuthar by avarice. The former aspired to restore the Gothic kingdom; the latter, after a promise to his brother of speedy

[1 Hodgkin c thinks the name Leuthar should not be regarded as equivalent to Lothair as Gibbon made it. Butilin is often spelt Buccelin.]

[554 A.D.]

succours, returned by the same road to deposit his treasure beyond the Alps. The strength of their armies was already wasted by the change of climate and contagion of disease: the Germans revelled in the vintage of Italy; and their own intemperance avenged, in some degree, the miseries of a defenceless people.

### BATTLE OF CAPUA, OR THE VULTURNUS (554 A.D.)

At the entrance of the spring, the imperial troops, who had guarded the cities, assembled, to the number of eighteen thousand men, in the neighbourhood of Rome. Their winter hours had not been consumed in idleness. By the command, and after the example, of Narses, they repeated each day their military exercise on foot and on horseback, accustomed their ear to obey the sound of the trumpet, and practised the steps and evolutions of the Pyrrhic dance. From the straits of Sicily, Butilin, with thirty thousand Franks and Alamanni, slowly moved towards Capua, occupied with a wooden tower the bridge of Casilinum, covered his right by the stream of the Vulturnus, and secured the rest of his encampment, by a rampart of sharp stakes, and a circle of wagons, whose wheels were buried in the earth. He impatiently awaited the return of Leuthar; ignorant, alas! that his brother could never return, and that the chief and his army had been swept away by a strange disease on the banks of the lake Benacus, between Trent and Verona. The banners of Narses soon approached the Vulturnus, and the eyes of Italy were anxiously fixed on the event of this final contest. Perhaps the talents of the Roman general were most conspicuous in the calm operations which precede the tumult of a battle. His skilful movements intercepted the subsistence of the barbarian, deprived him of the advantage of the bridge and river, and, in the choice of the ground and moment of action, reduced him to comply with the inclination of his enemy. On the morning of the important day, when the ranks were already formed, a servant, for some trivial fault, was killed by his master, one of the leaders of the Heruli. The justice or passion of Narses was awakened; he summoned the offender to his presence, and, without listening to his excuses, gave the signal to the minister of death. If the cruel master had not infringed the laws of his nation, this arbitrary execution was not less unjust, than it appears to have been imprudent. The Heruli felt the indignity; they halted: but the Roman general, without soothing their rage or awaiting their resolution, called aloud as the trumpets sounded that unless they hastened to occupy their place they would lose the honour of the victory. His troops were disposed in a long front, the cavalry on the wings; in the centre, the heavy-armed foot; the archers and slingers in the rear.

The Germans made their first advance in a sharp-pointed column, of the form of a triangle or solid wedge. They pierced the feeble centre of Narses, who received them with a smile into the fatal snare, and directed his wings of cavalry insensibly to wheel on their flanks and encompass the rear. The hosts of the Franks and Alamanni consisted of infantry: a sword and buckler hung by their side, and they used as their weapons of offence a weighty hatchet, and a hooked javelin, which were only formidable in close combat, or at a short distance. The flower of the Roman archers, on horseback and in complete armour, skirmished without peril round this immovable phalanx; supplied by active speed the deficiency of number; and aimed their arrows against a crowd of barbarians, who, instead of a cuirass and helmet, were covered by a loose garment of fur or linen. They

paused, they trembled, their ranks were confounded, and in the decisive moment the Heruli, preferring glory to revenge, charged with rapid violence the head of the column. Their leader, Sindual, and Aligern, the Gothic prince, deserved the prize of superior valour; and their example incited the victorious troops to achieve with swords and spears the destruction of the enemy. Butilin, and the greatest part of his army, perished on the field of battle, in the waters of the Vulturnus, or by the hands of the enraged peasants: but it may seem incredible that a victory,[1] which no more than five of the Alamanni survived, could be purchased with the loss of four-score Romans. Seven thousand Goths, the relics of the war, defended the fortress of Campsa till the ensuing spring; and every messenger of Narses announced the reduction of the Italian cities, whose names were corrupted by the ignorance or vanity of the Greeks. After the battle of Casilinum, Narses entered the capital; the arms and treasures of the Goths, the Franks, and Alamanni, were displayed; his soldiers, with garlands in their hands, chanted the praises of the conqueror; and Rome, for the last time, beheld the semblance of a triumph.

### END OF GOTHIC SWAY

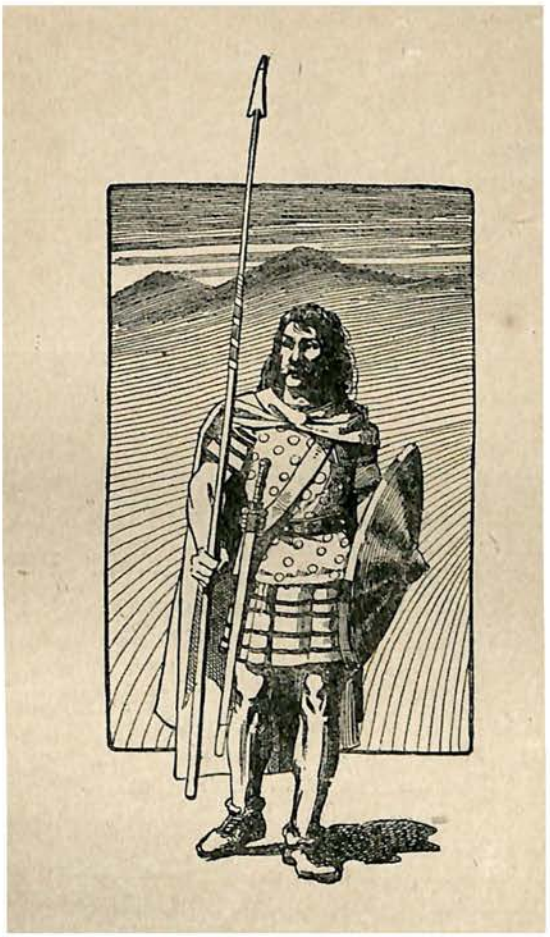
After a reign of sixty years, the throne of the Gothic kings was filled by the exarchs of Ravenna, the representatives in peace and war of the emperor of the Romans. Their jurisdiction was soon reduced to the limits of a narrow province; but Narses himself, the first and most powerful of the exarchs, administered about fifteen years the entire kingdom of Italy. Like Belisarius, he had deserved the honours of envy, calumny, and disgrace; but the favourite eunuch still enjoyed the confidence of Justinian, or the leader of a victorious army awed and repressed the ingratitude of a timid court. The fortifications were restored; a duke was stationed for the defence and military command of each of the principal cities; and the eye of Narses pervaded the ample prospect from Calabria to the Alps. The remains of the Gothic nation evacuated the country, or mingled with the people: the Franks, instead of revenging the death of Butilin, abandoned, without a struggle, their Italian conquests; and the rebellious Sindual, chief of the Heruli, was subdued, taken, and hung on a lofty gallows by the inflexible justice of the exarch. The civil state of Italy, after the agitation of a long tempest, was fixed by a pragmatic sanction, which the emperor promulgated at the request of the pope. Justinian introduced his own jurisprudence into the schools and tribunals of the West: he ratified the acts of Theodoric and his immediate successors, but every deed was rescinded and abolished, which force had extorted, or fear had subscribed, under the usurpation of Totila. A moderate theory was framed to reconcile the rights of property with the safety of prescription, the claims of the state with the poverty of the people, and the pardon of offences with the interest of virtue and order of society.

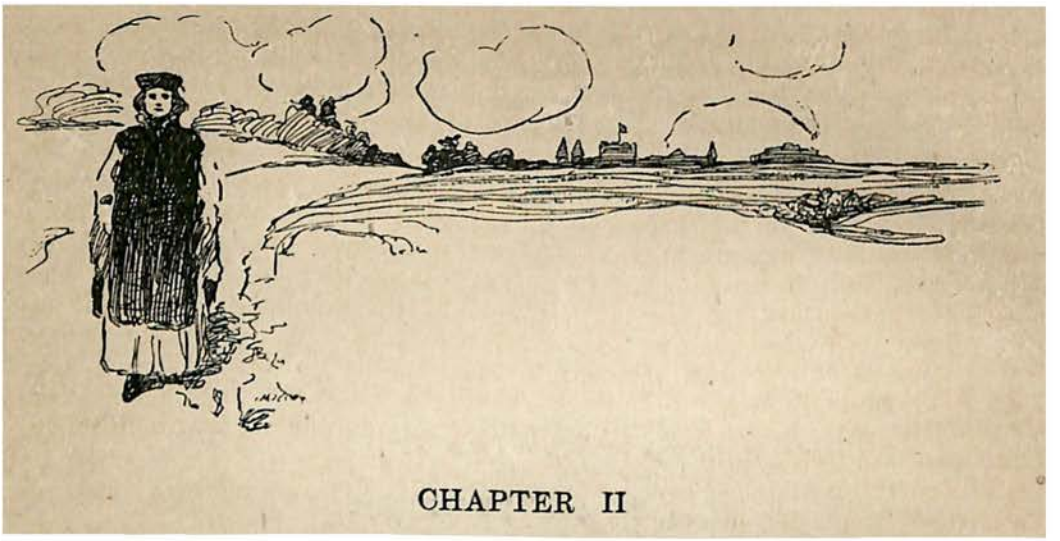
Under the exarchs of Ravenna, Rome was shortly degraded to the second rank. Yet the senators were gratified by the permission of visiting their estates in Italy, and of approaching without obstacle the throne of Constantinople; the regulation of weights and measures was delegated to the pope and senate; and the salaries of lawyers and physicians, of orators

[1] Agathias[m] has produced a Greek epigram of six lines on this victory of Narses, which is favourably compared to the battles of Marathon and Platæa. The chief difference is indeed in their consequences — so trivial in the former instance — so permanent and glorious in the latter.

[554–568 A.D.]

and grammarians, were destined to preserve or rekindle the light of science in the ancient capital. Justinian might dictate benevolent edicts, and Narses might second his wishes by the restoration of cities, and more especially of churches. But the power of kings is most effectual to destroy: and the twenty years of the Gothic War had consummated the distress and depopulation of Italy.[d]





# CHAPTER II

## LOMBARD INVASION TO LIUTPRAND'S DEATH

[568–744 A.D.]

### EARLY HISTORY OF THE LOMBARDS

HODGKIN[b] notes the interesting fact that neither Visigoth, nor Hun, nor Vandal, nor Ostrogoth left a single lasting memorial of their influence in Italy,—not even associating their names with a single province or city; whereas the "obscure and savage horde from Pannonia" called the Lombards were to have a much more permanent influence. He finds explanation in the utter exhaustion of Rome which was "unable to offer any longer even the passive resistance of despair." It is for this reason, he thinks, that, whereas the other conquerors had, one after another, vanished away almost in the very hour of their victories, the Lombard alone remained to "write his name for ever on that marvel of the munificence of nature, 'the waveless plain of Lombardy.'" It may perhaps be questioned whether the explanation is all-sufficient, but the interesting fact is an obvious matter of record.[a]

Probably the most ancient mention of the Lombards (Langobardi) is to be found in Velleius Paterculus,[c] who speaks of them as dwelling west of the Elbe and only in the lower portion, where they were subdued by Tiberius with much difficulty in the year 5 A.D.; for it is with the conquest of the Chauci — that is to say, the Chauci Majores and Minores who lived on both sides of the lower Visurgis (Weser) — that he connects the expedition of Tiberius on the Albis (Elbe) and the union of the army with the Roman fleet which had entered that river. Probably in order to avoid the Roman army, individual bands of Lombards (and Hermunduri) had settled on the right bank of the Elbe, and were followed by others on the occasion of a later expedition of the Romans; this seems to have given rise to Strabo's[d] erroneous remark, according to which the Hermunduri and Lombards both lived to the north of the Elbe and in the narrator's time had all retreated to the right bank; for we have no other definite information concerning the former residence of the Lombards and Hermunduri on the right bank of the Elbe, whilst we find traces of the Lombards south of the river in far later times. The *Widsidh-song* (in verse 49) mentions a people, the Headhobeardan,

who, as their name proves, were identical with the Langobardi, and who, as they fought the Danes for the possession of Zealand, must have occupied a portion of the coast of the Baltic; and in v. 42 a tribe of the Myrginge, who according to Müller[e] might probably be considered as a section of those same Headhobeardan settled in Holstein on the Eider. Shortly after this the Lombards must have been subjected by Marboduus; for according to a mention by Tacitus,[f] in the year 17 A.D., when war broke out between the Marcomannian king and Arminius, "from the realm of Marboduus, both Semnones and Lombards" went over to the side of the Cherusci in the hope of regaining their old independence. The fall of Marboduus secured them the liberty for which they were striving and a few decades later they had attained to considerable power. When in the year 47 Arminius' nephew Italicus, whom the Cherusci had begged of the Romans as king, was banished after a short reign, the Lombards forcibly reinstated him in his rights.

The next intelligence concerning our Lombards[1] was drawn by Petrus Patricius[h] from Dion Cassius[i]; from this we see that in the year 165, at the beginning of the great Marcomannian War, a host of six thousand German warriors — amongst whom, besides Marcomannians (probably the organisers of the expedition), there were also Lombards — undertook a predatory excursion into Pannonia, where the cavalry suffered a complete defeat under Vindex and the infantry under Candidus, so that the conquered had promptly to sue for peace and then quietly to return to their homes.

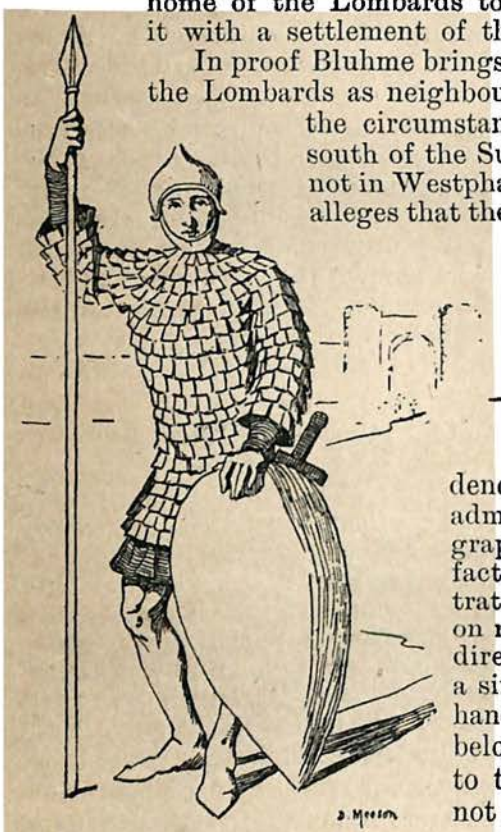
### THEIR WANDERINGS FROM THE ELBE TO THE DANUBE

Our authorities afford us scarcely any positive information concerning the departure of the Lombards from their possessions on the Lower Elbe; we are obliged to rely entirely on reasoning and conjecture. But the account in the *Origini* that hunger compelled the Lombards to leave Scoringa, may have been based on truth, as its pressure seems to have played no unimportant part at the time of the national migrations, especially in view of the rapid increase of the German races. Nevertheless, it was only a small portion of the people who then left their homes; this may be assumed from the appearance of power maintained by those who remained in their mother-country (the Bardi on the left bank of the Elbe and in Holstein) as well as from the histories in which the extraordinarily small number of roving Lombards is often commented on. We have then no further positive knowledge of the Lombards till they appear in Rugia, that is to say, north of the Danube, opposite to the Roman province of Noricum, in which region they must have arrived about the year 490. The fifth king of the Lombards, Gudeoc, was reigning at this period. The first, Agelmund, who was the first to be raised on a shield, must, as the people had already been wandering for some time, be placed somewhere in the middle of the fourth century, if we count four rulers to a century. As the Lombards were still regarded as dwelling on the lower Elbe in the year 165 A.D., the migration probably took place

[1 We may say here with Hodgkin[b] in using the word Lombards before its strict time, "it seems not worth while to encumber the text by the constant repetition of a long and somewhat uncouth race-name, but the reader is asked to remember that in strictness the form Langobardi should be preserved." It is the 12th century before the words "Lombard" and "Lombardy" come into general use and then largely with a geographical reference to Northern Italy, rather than an historical reference to the Langobard conquerors of far more than Lombardy. The origin of the name "Langobard" has been discussed under the "Eastern Empire," Chapter IV.]

in the course of the third century. It is probable that the Semnones and the Burgundiones immediately bordering on them had just gone to the southwest, incited by the migrations of the Goths in the middle of the second century A.D., and the Lombards invaded the district to the right of the Elbe which had been deserted; that the Lombards proceeded west of the Elbe, as F. Bluhme[k] and Förstemann[l] have asserted, resting their theory on quite uncertain and in part very arbitrary etymology, is improbable, as land for colonisation could scarcely have been won there without fighting powerful tribes.

The tradition of the Lombard folk-lore seems to point to the country east of the Elbe, but the story is very doubtful. Bluhme transfers the home of the Lombards to Moringen in Northeim, and connects it with a settlement of the Lombards in Westphalia.



A Lombard Warrior

In proof Bluhme brings forward the fact that Ptolemæus[o] knew the Lombards as neighbours of the Sugambri; but he overlooks the circumstance that these Lombards lived to the south of the Sugambri on the Rhine, and consequently not in Westphalia. Bluhme and after him Platner then alleges that the populations of Westphalia present coincidences in the names of families, the administration of the land and the later development of the law, with the Lüneburg district of the Elbe and Lübeck as likewise the ancient Soest-Lübeck law on many points recalls the *Edictum Langobardorum*. But it must be considered as a mistake to let the coincidence of individual principles of law and administration serve as arguments in ethnographical researches. For it is a known fact that for example the law and administration of the Anglo-Saxons and Lombards on many points, apart from the cases when a direct transmission may be supposed, show a similar development; whilst on the other hand, the language proves that the former belonged to the Low Germans and the latter to the High Germans, and therefore were not closely related peoples. In all these questions it is quite impossible for us to make a certain decision; Bluhme worked almost without the necessary materials to go upon, and the Saxon element which later invaded Westphalia and the lower Elbe had first to be identified and allowed for.

It may be asserted with a degree of certainty that the migrating Lombards first spread themselves over the present mark of Brandenburg, and were then forced to go southwest by the Slavs who were advancing from the east, and to seek refuge in Bohemia, a land well protected on all sides by natural boundaries. It was here, perhaps, that the first king Agelmund, as the legend says, was raised on a shield. Now that an historically authenticated succession of kings begins, tradition also commences to assume a firmer character, and to approach more and more closely to rĕal history. On the whole the story of Agelmund and his successor Lamissio is as yet completely

wrapped in obscurity, for that which is related concerning the two kings is not a popular legend based on history, but nothing more than a fictitious development of the primitive myth of Skeaf which Leo has described in a very detailed and thorough manner. The gist of this widespread and variously localised myth is that a hero of unknown descent, arising from the water, comes to the assistance of a country in a time of great distress; and the story was transferred to Lombard history because in northern Italy the common Latin word *lama* (for *piscina*) was etymologically associated by the people with the name of Lamissio. These tales cannot be historically interpreted, and, for example, it would also be wrong to consider the battle with the Bulgarians recounted by Paulus[p] as an historical fact; but it is evident from this that the name of Bulgaria had not appeared before the end of the fifth century. We likewise learn nothing concerning the history of the Lombards under the next kings, Lethu and Hildeoc; under King Gudeoc, the fifth in succession, we find them again in the territory of the Rugii, where they had gone when the latter had been conquered and expelled by Odoacer in the years 487 and 488. This land of the Rugii extended, so far as we can gather from our scanty sources of information, somewhere between the modern Linz and Vienna, on the left bank of the Danube; the right bank of the river does not seem to have been included. Opposite lay Noricum, which at the same time was partly abandoned by Odoacer as untenable, and now, probably, immediately after the evacuation was occupied by the Boii established in Bohemia. The Lombards then had to content themselves with the far less inviting and more barren land of the Rugii — in all probability because they had formerly been established to the rear of Marcomannians, that is to say, in North Bohemia, and had proceeded southwards in their train.

### THE LOMBARDS IN THE REGIONS OF THE DANUBE

Unfortunately the history of the Lombard kingdom in Rugia is also shrouded in obscurity, inasmuch as our sources afford no positive information concerning it; for the story derived from the boastful Herulian account in Procopius,[m] according to which in the year 491 the Lombards had been tributary to the Heruli — which would have been during the sojourn in Rugia, as the Lombards first went there in 490 and are said to have lived there many years — must, according to Pallmann's[n] convincing arguments, be regarded as a fiction. It may possibly be with truth that Procopius describes the Lombards as being already Arian Christians at this time, although the corrupted passages of the *Gothic War* can scarcely be considered as confirmation. According to the *Origin*,[j] the Lombards under King Tato wandered from Rugia to the distant plain called "Feld" by the barbarians, by which is probably meant the plains between the Theiss and Danube, as is shown by the remarkable passage in the *Annales Einhardi*[q] of the year 796. Here the Lombards remained for a period of about three years until war broke out between them and the Herulians, with whom they had formerly been on peaceful and friendly terms. We are well informed as to this war, through the Herulian account in Procopius[m] and the Lombard account in the *Origin*; it is only to be regretted that legendary stories have intruded into both narratives. According to the former, the Herulians had only declared war out of sheer lust of doing and fighting; according to the *Origin* the strife was kindled because the daughter of King

Tato had murdered a Herulian ambassador. It is remarkable that neither of the two nations attributed it to the enemy, but considered themselves as the originators; we must therefore assume that both reports have some truth in them, that both nations, Herulians as well as Lombards, were responsible for the outbreak of war. Further particulars are obscured by legend, and can no longer be ascertained. Both statements agree in the statement that the Herulians were completely defeated, and for the greater part destroyed; and we are further informed that their king, Rodulf, lost his life in the battle.

It is difficult to determine at what time this event took place; it will not be possible to arrive at a definite conclusion in the matter. According to Procopius, the defeat took place three years after the accession of the emperor Anastasius; but from the *Origin* we see that the sojourn in Rugia must have been far longer than it would be in this case; for in this period is included the entire reign of a king Claffo, and part of those of two kings, Gudeoc and Tato.

Therefore the time given by Procopius, "three years after," must be regarded as an empty phrase; this also applies to the notice in the *Origin*, according to which the war with the Herulians began three years after the occupation of the plains of Feld, and which must be judged in the same manner, especially as no importance can be attached to the chronological tables in the first part of the *Origin*. On the other hand, it is certain that after their defeat the Herulians left their old seats, and before passing into Roman territory settled first in Rugia and then amongst the Gepids; as Procopius asserts that these wanderings occupied only a short time, we shall not be wrong in placing them within three to four years at the most, and thus referring the battle to about the year 508.[1] A letter of the king of the Ostrogoths, Theodoric, has been used as a point of reckoning: it was sent to the kings of the Heruli, Warni, and Thuringii, when Clovis was threatening the Visigoths with war, and probably belonged to about the year 501; from this it may be concluded that the kingdom of the Herulians on the Danube was at this time still existing in its full integrity, and that the memorable battle can only have taken place some time afterwards.

It is noteworthy that the principal means Theodoric uses to incite these kings to support the Visigoths is the endeavour to increase their fear of the Franks, of whom the kingdom of the Visigoths was in dread, nor could they see the development of the power of Clovis without some anxiety. This points to the more or less close neighbourhood of the Franks; otherwise the danger would not have been so great or so imminent. Lippert[r] has shown that the Thuringii and Warni must have been established directly on the frontiers of the Frank Empire towards central Germany; the Heruli to whose princes this letter was sent, must have been settled near the Frankish borders.

Without doubt they are to be identified with the Heruli, who undertook numerous expeditions to the Rhine, to Gaul, and even to Spain, and are to be distinguished from the Heruli of the Danube; their seats are also to be placed on various points of the German and Dutch north coast, as well as in the Cimbric Chersonesus. In this respect it is well to notice that Sidonius Apollinaris[s] mentions an embassy of these Heruli to the Visigothic

[1 Hodgkin,[b] however, says, "The war between King Tato and King Rodulph is narrated by Procopius as well as by Paulus and can be assigned without much risk of error to a definite date. 511 or 512."]

king Euric, and Cassiodorus[l] mentions a letter reminding the Herulian king of the favours received by Euric; through this embassy friendly relations were established between the two peoples.

### WARS WITH THE GEPIDS

With that victory begins the most brilliant epoch of the history of the Lombards. It was followed by the invasion of the Lombards from the south-east into the territory of the Herulians, and they compelled the latter to seek refuge in Rugia. As Procopius[m] states, hunger, and probably the advance of the Lombards in these regions, obliged the vanquished to migrate again, until they at last found protection with the powerful Gepids, who were of kindred race. On the occasion of this advance of the Lombards, the subjection of the Suavi also took place, which the *Origini* fixes under King Wacho the successor of Tato.

A Lombard King

The name of Wacho became famous, and the Lombards very desirable confederates; thus in the spring of 539 the Ostrogoth king Witiges sought to obtain their help against the Byzantines, but was refused as the Lombards had already formed an alliance with the Byzantines. An alliance seems also to have existed with the Thuringii, for the first wife of Wacho, Radegund, was the daughter of the Thuringian king Bisinus. Then Wacho married Ostrogotha, the daughter of the Gepidean king, which makes it very probable that the Lombard kingdom bordered on the Gepidean, as our statement concerning the position of the plain "Feld" confirms. The two daughters he had by her were again married to Frankish kings, namely Wisigarda to King Theudebert (534–548), Walderada to Theudebald (548–555), then also to Clotaire I (561, who, compelled by the clergy, resigned her to the Bavarian duke Garibald). In connection with this and also later alliances, is the plan of Theudebert to overthrow the Byzantine Empire by the help of the Lombards and Gepids during the war in Italy, against Totila.

A third wife of Wacho was Salinga, who bore him a son, Waltari. The latter reigned after his father's death, according to the *Origin* for seven years, but as he was a minor he was under the guardianship of a Lombard of noble birth named Audoin, who afterwards succeeded him as king. Shortly after the accession of Audoin, the Lombards passed over into Pannonia, which had been given to them by the emperor Justinian, who had first taken it from the Goths, as Procopius states. It cannot have been a voluntary cession. Justinian had to evacuate the country because he was no longer in a position to protect it against the Lombard invasion. By the sums of money he gave to the Lombards he doubtless hoped to buy peace for the sorely tried provinces, just as the Gepids and others had been restrained from devastating the Roman province by gifts of gold.

Not long after the occupation of Pannonia — according to Procopius apparently in 548 — war broke out between the Gepids and Lombards. The incitements of the emperor Justinian may be considered as the chief motive; it was in his interest to destroy the friendship of the two peoples who threatened to become dangerous to the empire. The ever increasing desire of the Lombards to gain possession of the important town of Sirmium in lower Pannonia which was occupied by the Gepids, and above all, the hostile feelings which had been raised between the two peoples by disputes at the Lombard court concerning the succession (disputes which began in Wacho's time) came to his assistance.

We are informed as to these interesting proceedings by Procopius and the *Origin.* Procopius[m] relates as follows: "King Wacho had a cousin who by law ought to have succeeded him on his death; but in order to procure the crown for his son he had Risiulf banished from the land under a false accusation."

Risiulf with his two sons, one named Hildichis, and a small number of his adherents fled to the Warni, and at the instigation of Wacho was murdered by them; Hildichis' brother succumbed to an illness, whilst he himself fled and took up his residence with a Slavonian tribe, and then in the time of King Audoin, when war broke out between the Lombards and Gepids, he gave himself up to the latter who also promised to procure for him the royal crown of the Lombards. According to the *Origini* Wacho, son of Winigis and nephew of King Tato, expelled him from the throne. Tato's son, the rightful heir to the throne, named Hildichis, who sought to assert his rights, was suppressed and obliged to take refuge with the Gepids who from the time of his arrival showed great hatred for the Lombards. Both reports are incomplete but supplement one another well. The event was doubtless this, that Wacho overthrew his uncle Tato, then, when he had become king, banished Tato's son Risiulf (his cousin) and the latter's son (Hildichis) from the country, as he wished to insure the crown for his own son Waltari, whilst, not the law, as Procopius erroneously says, but his descent and the love of the people would have won the government for the heirs of the deposed king Tato.

Risiulf was murdered in his flight. Hildichis fled to the Gepids at a time when the discord between them and the Lombards had already reached a high point, and, it seems, by his presence precipitated the outbreak of war. His hope that the Gepids would help him to regain his rights was not fulfilled.

As the Lombards did not feel themselves a match for the Gepids, they had sent ambassadors to Justinian to beg for help which was granted, not in consideration of former agreements which the emperor seldom observed, but because the Byzantine principle was to stand by the weaker side that the stronger might be the more completely destroyed. The Gepids who demanded support or, at least, neutrality, on the grounds of a former treaty promising them Roman help in case of war, were refused, and a Roman army consisting of some ten thousand horsemen and fifteen hundred Herulian warriors advanced against them. Before they met, the imperial troops destroyed a division of three thousand Herulians, who were allies of the Gepids, and compelled them to conclude a separate peace with the Lombards. As a security for the newly formed friendly relations Audoin summoned the king of the Gepids, Thorisind, to surrender Hildichis; meanwhile the latter had escaped and for a long time wandered as an adventurer through various lands.

The first war of the Lombards and Gepids was soon followed by another (549), which also found a speedy ending without any decision being arrived at.

According to Procopius a panic seems to have seized both armies before the battle and put them to disorderly flight. The kings, therefore, again met and concluded a two years' armistice; at the close of that time hostilities began again. This time also Justinian placed himself on the side of the Lombards — he broke the treaty formed shortly before with the Gepids — and sent troops to the field, a division of which was under the command of Amalafrid; only the latter and his soldiers reached the Lombards; the other troops remained in Ulpiana at the imperial command, evidently for the purpose of quelling disturbances there. Nevertheless the Lombards succeeded in invading the Gepidean territory and in completely beating their adversaries; the seat of war was probably Sirmium. Procopius places this battle in the seventeenth year of the war, probably July, 551. It is very probably the same which Paulus *p* describes and during which Alboin, Audoin's son, unhorsed the son of the Gepidean king, Torismond, in single combat. The terrible defeat compelled the Gepids to seek peace, which was granted them through the mediation of Justinian.

As conditions the Lombards and the emperor demanded the surrender of Hildichis; for after his flight from the Gepids in 548, — after he had first wandered about Italy with Byzantine troops, had then lived amongst a Slav people, and as leader of a troop had served in the imperial palace guard in Constantinople, — he had lately returned to them that he might again assert his claims to the Lombard throne. But as the Gepids were determined not to violate the laws of hospitality and for the same reason the Lombards would not surrender Ostrogothus who had sought refuge with them, after Thorisind had expelled him from his rightful throne, and whose surrender was now demanded in return, Hildichis was not given up; soon after the two princes, not without the connivance of the king, were assassinated (552), that there might be no more occasion for the rupture of the peace just concluded.

Before the outbreak of the war, Audoin at the request of Justinian sent twenty-five hundred picked Lombard warriors as well as three thousand troops to Italy to the army of Narses; with them they went through the famous campaign against Totila, but, owing to their licentiousness after the decisive battle at Taginæ (autumn, 552), they were richly rewarded and sent home under an escort.

The peace concluded with the Gepids lasted as long as Audoin and Thorisind lived; but when they both died and Alboin was ruler of the Lombards (555), while Cunimund had become king of the Gepids, the enmity restrained with difficulty burst out again with redoubled violence.

### ALBOIN ANNIHILATES THE GEPID POWER

According to the tradition, the *Origin* relates that after the battle in which he had become so famous, Alboin went directly into the hostile country to King Thorisind, to fetch the arms according to ancient custom; on this visit he for the first time saw the lovely Rosamund, the youngest daughter of the late king Cunimund, with whom he fell passionately in love (551).

But political considerations now obliged him to take Clotosuinda, daughter of the Frank king Clotaire I, to wife; when she died his thoughts

turned once more to the love of his youth, and as she would not follow him voluntarily he had her brought to his kingdom by force.

Cunimund demanded his daughter back as he did not approve of the union with the hated Lombard: finally war broke out. At first the Lombards had the advantage, but were defeated in the end, when the Gepids succeeded in winning over the emperor Justinus II (Nov. 14, 565); the result was the release of Rosamund. To avenge the defeat and to free himself from oppression, Alboin now sought allies on all sides; he found them at last in the powerful and universally dreaded Avars (settled east of the Pruth on the Black Sea), who only consented to help after long pleading and on very heavy conditions; the Lombards were to give the tenth part of their cattle, and to promise after the victory was obtained to give up half the booty and renounce the whole district of the Gepids. That these demands were granted shows better than any direct proofs in what need the Lombards then were. When Cunimund heard of this formidable alliance, he turned to the emperor Justinus to ask the latter to send him auxiliary troops in accordance with the treaty; he also promised to yield Sirmium, and the land this side of the Drave to the Eastern Roman Empire. Justinus did not at once directly refuse the request, but he wilfully made every kind of delay in sending the troops and finally kept them back, not only for the reason given by Menander, but probably because he did not wish to compromise himself and allow the formidable power of the Avars and Lombards, which was superior to that of the Byzantines and Gepids together, to rule his empire. Therefore, he remained a neutral and idle spectator of the unequal strife; he seems to have taken advantage of a favourable opportunity to win possession of the town of Sirmium, as at the fall of the kingdom of the Gepids it appears as already among the Byzantine possessions. The war was opened by the simultaneous invasion of the kingdom of the Gepids by the allies from two sides.

Cunimund first marched against the Lombards to prevent their union with the Avars; but he was beaten by his adversaries in a bloody battle and his army almost completely destroyed. He himself fell in the battle by Alboin's hand, as his brother Torismond had done many years before; his daughter Rosamund with many others fell as prisoners into the power of the Lombards, and their king now made her his wife without any fear of the paternal opposition.

The booty was immeasurable; nevertheless, the bishop Trasaric and the grandson of the fallen king Reptila succeeded in bringing the royal treasure to Constantinople in safety.

But by this defeat the kingdom of the Gepids was completely destroyed; for what the Lombards did not bring under their sway, fell beneath the harsh yoke of the Avars; and in presumptuous tones the Byzantines rejoiced over the quick destruction of their dangerous foes.[u]

### ALBOIN PLANS TO INVADE ITALY

The destruction of a mighty kingdom established the fame of Alboin. In the days of Charlemagne, the Bavarians, the Saxons, and the other tribes of the Teutonic language, still repeated the songs which described the heroic virtues, the valour, liberality, and fortune of the king of the Lombards. But his ambition was yet unsatisfied; and the conqueror of the Gepids turned his eyes from the Danube to the richer banks of the Po and the Tiber.

[565-568 A.D.]

Fifteen years had not elapsed since his subjects, the confederates of Narses, had visited the pleasant climate of Italy; the mountains, the rivers, the highways, were familiar to their memory; the report of their success, perhaps the view of their spoils, had kindled in the rising generation the flame of emulation and enterprise. Their hopes were encouraged by the spirit and eloquence of Alboin; and it is affirmed that he spoke to their senses, by producing at the royal feast the fairest and most exquisite fruits that grew spontaneously in the garden of the world.

No sooner had he erected his standard, than the native strength of the Lombards was multiplied by the adventurous youth of Germany and Scythia. The robust peasantry of Noricum and Pannonia had resumed the manners of barbarians; and the names of the Gepids, Bulgarians, Sarmatians (or Slavs), and Bavarians, may be distinctly traced in the provinces of Italy. Of the Saxons, the old allies of the Lombards, twenty thousand warriors, with their wives and children, accepted the invitation of Alboin. Their bravery contributed to his success; but the accession or the absence of their numbers was not sensibly felt in the magnitude of his host. Every mode of religion was freely practised by its respective votaries. The king of the Lombards had been educated in the Arian heresy; but the Catholics, in their public worship, were allowed to pray for his conversion; while the more stubborn barbarians sacrificed a she-goat, or perhaps a captive, to the gods of their fathers. The Lombards and their confederates were united by their common attachment to a chief, who excelled in all the virtues and vices of a savage hero; and the vigilance of Alboin provided an ample magazine of offensive and defensive arms for the use of the expedition. The portable wealth of the Lombards attended the march (April 2nd, 568); their lands they cheerfully relinquished to the Avars, on the solemn promise, which was made and accepted without a smile, that if they failed in the conquest of Italy, these voluntary exiles should be reinstated in their former possessions.

### THE END OF NARSES

They might have failed, if Narses had been the antagonist of the Lombards; and the veteran warriors, the associates of his Gothic victory, would have encountered with reluctance an enemy whom they dreaded and esteemed. But the weakness of the Byzantine court was subservient to the barbarian cause; and it was for the ruin of Italy that the emperor once listened to the complaints of his subjects. The virtues of Narses were stained with avarice; and in his provincial reign of fifteen years he accumulated a treasure of gold and silver which surpassed the modesty of a private fortune. His government was oppressive or unpopular, and the general discontent was expressed with freedom by the deputies of Rome. Before the throne of Justin they boldly declared, that their Gothic servitude had been more tolerable than the despotism of a Greek eunuch; and that, unless their tyrant were instantly removed, they would consult their own happiness in the choice of a master. The apprehension of a revolt was urged by the voice of envy and detraction, which had so recently triumphed over the merit of Belisarius.

A new exarch, Longinus, was appointed (565) to supersede the conqueror of Italy; and the base motives of his recall were revealed in the insulting mandate of the empress Sophia, "that he should leave to men the exercise of arms, and return to his proper station among the maidens of the palace, where a distaff should be again placed in the hand of the eunuch."

"I will spin her such a thread as she shall not easily unravel!" is said to have been the reply which indignation and conscious virtue extorted from the hero. Instead of attending, a slave and a victim, at the gate of the Byzantine palace, he retired to Naples, from whence (if any credit is due to the belief of the times) Narses invited the Lombards to chastise the ingratitude of the prince and people.[1] But the passions of the people are furious and changeable; and the Romans soon recollected the merits, or dreaded the resentment, of their victorious general. By the mediation of the pope, who undertook a special pilgrimage to Naples, their repentance was accepted; and Narses, assuming a milder aspect and a more dutiful language, consented to fix his residence in the Capitol. His death (572 or 573), though in the extreme period of old age, was unseasonable and premature, since his genius alone could have repaired the last and fatal error of his life. The reality, or the suspicion, of a conspiracy disarmed and disunited the Italians. The soldiers resented the disgrace, and bewailed the loss of their general. They were ignorant of their new exarch; and Longinus was himself ignorant of the state of the army and the province. In the preceding years Italy had been desolated by pestilence and famine; and a disaffected people ascribed the calamities of nature to the guilt or folly of their rulers.

A LOMBARD COSTUME

### THE LOMBARDS ENTER ITALY

Whatever might be the grounds of his security, Alboin neither expected nor encountered a Roman army in the field. He ascended the Julian Alps and looked down with contempt and desire on the fruitful plains to which his victory communicated the perpetual appellation of Lombardy. A faithful chieftain and a select band were stationed at Forum Julii, the modern Friuli, to guard the passes of the mountains. The Lombards respected the strength of Pavia, and listened to the prayers of the Trevisans: their slow and heavy multitudes proceeded to occupy the palace and city of Verona; and Milan, now rising from her ashes, was invested by the powers of Alboin (September 3, 569).

Terror preceded his march; he found everywhere, or he left, a dreary solitude;[2] and the pusillanimous Italians presumed, without a trial, that the stranger was invincible. Escaping to lakes, or rocks, or morasses, the affrighted crowds concealed some fragments of their wealth, and delayed the moment of their servitude. Paulinus, the patriarch of Aquileia, removed

[1 The distaff story is told by Paulus *p* Diaconus, who wrote two centuries later and quoted a work a century earlier. Isidore of Seville,*v* however, who wrote only half a century after Narses' recall, accuses him of calling in the Lombards. The story is none the less somewhat dubious.]

[2 Hodgkin *b* says of the Lombards: "They are the anarchists of the Völkerwanderung, whose delight is only in destruction, and who seem incapable of culture. Yet this is the race from which, in the fullness of time, under the transmuting power of the old Italian civilisation, were to spring Anselm and Lanfranc, Hildebrand and Dante Alighieri."]

his treasures, sacred and profane, to the isle of Grado, and his successors were adopted by the infant republic of Venice, which was continually enriched by the public calamities. Honoratus, who filled the chair of St. Ambrose, had credulously accepted the faithless offers of a capitulation; and the archbishop, with the clergy and nobles of Milan, were driven by the perfidy of Alboin to seek a refuge in the less accessible ramparts of Genoa. Along the maritime coast, the courage of the inhabitants was supported by the facility of supply, the hopes of relief, and the power of escape; but from the Trentine hills to the gates of Ravenna and Rome, the inland regions of Italy became, without a battle or a siege, the lasting patrimony of the Lombards. The submission of the people invited the barbarian to assume the character of a lawful sovereign, and the helpless exarch was confined to the office of announcing to the emperor Justin, the rapid and irretrievable loss of his provinces and cities.

One city which had been diligently fortified by the Goths, resisted the arms of a new invader; and while Italy was subdued by the flying detachments of the Lombards, the royal camp was fixed above three years before the western gate of Ticinum, or Pavia. The same courage which obtains the esteem of a civilised enemy, provokes the fury of a savage, and the impatient besieger had bound himself by a tremendous oath, that age, and sex, and dignity, should be confounded in a general massacre. The aid of famine at length enabled him to execute his bloody vow; but as Alboin entered the gate, his horse stumbled, fell, and could not be raised from the ground. One of his attendants was prompted by compassion, or piety, to interpret this miraculous sign as the wrath of heaven: the conqueror paused and relented; he sheathed his sword, and, peacefully reposing himself in the palace of Theodoric, proclaimed to the trembling multitude, that they should live and obey. Delighted with the situation of a city, which was endeared to his pride by the difficulty of the purchase, the prince of the Lombards disdained the ancient glories of Milan; and Pavia, during some ages, was respected as the capital of the kingdom of Italy.

### THE END OF ALBOIN (573 A.D.)

The reign of the founder was splendid and transient; and before he could regulate his new conquests, Alboin fell a sacrifice to domestic treason and female revenge. In a palace near Verona, which had not been erected for the barbarians, he feasted the companions of his arms; intoxication was the reward of valour, and the king himself was tempted by appetite, or vanity, to exceed the ordinary measure of his intemperance. After draining many capacious bowls of Rætian or Falernian wine, he called for the skull of Cunimund [the late Gepid king, his wife's father], the noblest and most precious ornament of his sideboard. This cup of victory [1] was accepted with horrid applause by the circle of the Lombard chiefs.

[1 This custom of making a drinking cup of an enemy's skull originally came from Asiatic Scythia, and was widely diffused in northern Europe: nowhere was it more religiously observed than in Scandinavia, the cradle of the Lombards. Their historian avers that he had seen the cup with his own eyes: *Hoc ne cui videretur impossibile, — veritatem in Christo loquor — ego hoc poculum vidi in quodam die festo*, etc. *Paulus Diaconus*, p lib. ii. cap. 28.

A modern Italian historian (Botta), totally unacquainted with the manners of the north, expresses great surprise at this act of Alboin: *La naturale ferocia pel vino e per la vittoria a oltraggio fatta insolente, lo menava a tal atto di cui non è memoria nelle storie delle piu barbare nazioni*, etc. The thing was common enough, as abundantly appears from the Scandinavian records.]

"Fill it again with wine," exclaimed the inhuman conqueror, "fill it to the brim; carry this goblet to the queen, and request in my name that she would rejoice with her father." In an agony of grief and rage, Rosamund had strength to utter, "Let the will of my lord be obeyed," and, touching it with her lips, pronounced a silent imprecation, that the insult should be washed away in the blood of Alboin.

Some indulgence might be due to the resentment of a daughter, if she had not already violated the duties of a wife. Implacable in her enmity, or inconstant in her love, the queen of Italy had stooped from the throne to the arms of a subject; and Helmichis, the king's armour-bearer, was the secret minister of her pleasure and revenge. Against the proposal of the murder he could no longer urge the scruples of fidelity or gratitude; but Helmichis trembled when he revolved the danger, as well as the guilt, when he recollected the matchless strength and intrepidity of a warrior whom he had so often attended in the field of battle. He pressed and obtained that one of the bravest champions of the Lombards should be associated to the enterprise; but no more than a promise of secrecy could be drawn from the gallant Peredeo; and the mode of seduction employed by Rosamund betrays her shameless insensibility both to honour and love. She supplied the place of one of her female attendants, who was beloved by Peredeo, and contrived some excuse for darkness and silence, till she could inform her companion that he had enjoyed the queen of the Lombards, and that his own death, or the death of Alboin, must be the consequence of such treasonable adultery. In this alternative, he chose rather to be the accomplice than the victim of Rosamund, whose undaunted spirit was incapable of fear or remorse. She expected, and soon found, a favourable moment, when the king, oppressed with wine, had retired from the table to his afternoon slumbers. His faithless spouse was anxious for his health and repose; the gates of the palace were shut, the arms removed, the attendants dismissed, and Rosamund, after lulling him to rest by her tender caresses, unbolted the chamber door and urged the reluctant conspirators to the deed.

On the first alarm the warrior started from his couch. His sword, which he attempted to draw, had been fastened to the scabbard by the hand of Rosamund; and a small stool, his only weapon, could not long protect him from the spears of the assassins. The daughter of Cunimund smiled in his fall; his body was buried under the staircase of the palace, and the grateful posterity of the Lombards revered the tomb and the memory of their victorious leader.

The ambitious Rosamund aspired to reign in the name of her lover. The city and palace of Verona were awed by her power, and a faithful band of her native Gepids was prepared to applaud the revenge and to second the wishes of their sovereign. But the Lombard chiefs, who fled in the first moments of consternation and disorder, had resumed their courage and collected their powers; and the nation, instead of submitting to her reign, demanded, with unanimous cries, that justice should be executed on the guilty spouse and the murderers of their king. She sought a refuge among the enemies of her country, and a criminal who deserved the abhorrence of mankind was protected by the selfish policy of the exarch. With her daughter, the heiress of the Lombard throne, her two lovers, her trusty Gepids, and the spoils of the palace of Verona, Rosamund descended the Adige and the Po, and was transported by a Greek vessel to the safe harbour of Ravenna. Longinus beheld with delight the charms and the treasures of the widow of Alboin: her situation and her past conduct might justify the most licentious

proposals; and she readily listened to the passion of a minister who, even in the decline of the empire, was respected as the equal of kings. The death of a jealous lover was an easy and grateful sacrifice; and as Helmichis issued from the bath, he received the deadly potion from the hand of his mistress. The taste of the liquor, its speedy operation, and his experience of the character of Rosamund convinced him that he was poisoned. He pointed his dagger to her breast, compelled her to drain the remainder of the cup, and expired in a few minutes, with the consolation that she could not survive to enjoy the fruits of her wickedness. The daughter of Alboin and Rosamund, with the richest spoils of the Lombards, was embarked for Constantinople. The surprising strength of Peredeo amused and terrified the imperial court; his blindness and revenge exhibited an imperfect copy of the adventures of Samson. By the free suffrage of the nation, in the assembly of Pavia, Cleph, one of their noblest chiefs, was elected as the successor of Alboin. Before the end of eighteen months the throne was polluted by a second murder, — Cleph was stabbed by the hand of a domestic. The regal office was suspended above ten years, during the minority of his son Authari, and Italy was divided and oppressed by a ducal aristocracy of thirty tyrants.[w]

Hard as was the rule of these "guests," they took only a third of the produce of the country, while the Visigoths had taken two-thirds, and the Burgundians nearly as much. Then the 26,000 Saxons, weary of the presumption of their Lombard allies, decided to evacuate Italy for Gaul. On their first visit to Dauphiné, the Roman general Mummolus drove them back with slaughter. About a year later the Saxons tried again at harvest time. Mummolus allowed them to pass through only on payment of a heavy toll. The Saxons went back to their old home; but the Swabians had moved in, and being driven to bay, slew almost all the host.

The Lombards had soon drifted round Rome; and in 574, under Cleph, had the city besieged. The emperor Justin sent a corn fleet to save the city from starvation; and in 575 sent an army under his son-in-law Braduarius, who lost both the battle and his life.

Still in 579 the popes are crying eastward for help. In 578 the new emperor, Tiberius II, sent money to buy a little respite. Meanwhile, between 568 and 575, the Lombards had five times gone raiding into Gaul. Twice the brave Mummolus threw them back. In 584 the Austrasians, bribed by the emperor Maurice, invaded Italy under their young leader Childebert, and the Lombards were forced to pay them to leave the country. This convinced the Lombards that their ducal oligarchy was a failure; and they made a king of Cleph's son Authari, giving him the prenomen of Flavius, which thereafter all the Lombard kings retained.[a]

Under the standard of their new king, the conquerors of Italy withstood three successive invasions, one of which was led by Childebert himself, the last of the Merovingian race who descended from the Alps. The first expedition was defeated by the jealous animosity of the Franks and Alamanni. In the second they were vanquished in a bloody battle, with more loss and dishonour than they had sustained since the foundation of their monarchy. Impatient for revenge, they returned a third time with accumulated force, and Authari yielded to the fury of the torrent. The troops and treasures of the Lombards were distributed in the walled towns between the Alps and the Apennine. A nation, less sensible of danger than of fatigue and delay, soon murmured against the folly of their twenty commanders; and the hot vapours of an Italian sun infected with disease those tramontane bodies which had already suffered the vicissitudes of intemperance and famine. The powers

that were inadequate to the conquest were more than sufficient for the desolation of the country; nor could the trembling natives distinguish between their enemies and their deliverers. If the junction of the Merovingian and imperial forces had been effected in the neighbourhood of Milan, perhaps they might have subverted the throne of the Lombards; but the Franks awaited six days the signal of a flaming village, and the arms of the Greeks were idly employed in the reduction of Modena and Parma, which were torn from them after the retreat of their transalpine allies. The victorious Authari asserted his claim to the dominion of Italy. At the foot of the Rætian Alps, he subdued the resistance, and rifled the hidden treasures, of a sequestered island in the lake of Comum. At the extreme point of Calabria he touched with his spear a column on the seashore of Rhegium, proclaiming that ancient landmark to stand the immovable boundary of his kingdom.

### EXTENT OF LOMBARD SWAY

During a period of two hundred years, Italy was unequally divided between the kingdom of the Lombards and the exarchate of Ravenna. The offices and professions, which the jealousy of Constantine had separated, were united by the indulgence of Justinian; and eighteen successive exarchs were invested, in the decline of the empire, with the full remains of civil, of military, and even of ecclesiastical power. Their immediate jurisdiction, which was afterwards consecrated as the patrimony of St. Peter, extended over the modern Romagna, the marshes or valleys of Ferrara and Commachio; five maritime cities from Rimini to Ancona, and a second inland Pentapolis, between the Adriatic coast and the hills of the Apennine. Three subordinate provinces, of Rome, of Venice, and of Naples, which were divided by hostile lands from the palace of Ravenna, acknowledged, both in peace and war, the supremacy of the exarch. The duchy of Rome appears to have included the Tuscan, Sabine, and Latian conquests of the first four hundred years of the city, and the limits may be distinctly traced along the coast from Civita Vecchia, to Tarracina, and with the course of the Tiber from Ameria and Narni to the port of Ostia. The numerous islands from Grado to Chiozza, composed the infant dominion of Venice; but the more accessible towns on the continent were overthrown by the Lombards, who beheld with impotent fury a new capital rising from the waves. The power of the dukes of Naples was circumscribed by the bay and the adjacent isles, by the hostile territory of Capua, and by the Roman colony of Amalfi, whose industrious citizens, by the invention of the mariner's compass, have unveiled the face of the globe. The three islands of Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily, still adhered to the empire; and the acquisition of the farther Calabria removed the landmark of Authari from the shore of Rhegium to the isthmus of Consentia. In Sardinia, the savage mountaineers preserved the liberty and religion of their ancestors; but the husbandmen of Sicily were chained to their rich and cultivated soil. Rome was oppressed by the iron sceptre of the exarchs, and a Greek, perhaps a eunuch, insulted with impunity the ruins of the Capitol. But Naples soon acquired the privilege of electing her own dukes; the independence of Amalfi was the fruit of commerce; and the voluntary attachment of Venice was finally ennobled by an equal alliance with the Eastern Empire. On the map of Italy, the measure of the exarchate occupies a very inadequate space, but it included an ample proportion of wealth, industry, and population.

[568-774 A.D.]

The most faithful and valuable subjects escaped from the barbarian yoke; and the banners of Pavia and Verona, of Milan and Padua, were displayed in their respective quarters by the new inhabitants of Ravenna. The remainder of Italy was possessed by the Lombards; and from Pavia, the royal seat, their kingdom was extended to the east, the north, and the west, as far as the confines of the Avars, the Bavarians, and the Franks of Austrasia and Burgundy. In the language of modern geography, it is now represented by the Terra Firma of the Venetian republic, Tyrol, the Milanese, Piedmont, the coast of Genoa, Mantua, Parma, and Modena, the grand duchy of Tuscany, and a large portion of the ecclesiastical state from Perugia to the Adriatic. The dukes, and at length the princes, of Benevento survived the monarchy, and propagated the name of the Lombards. From Capua to Tarentum they reigned near five hundred years.

In comparing the proportion of the victorious and the vanquished people, the change of language will afford the most probable inference. According to this standard it will appear, that the Lombards of Italy, and the Visigoths of Spain, were less numerous than the Franks or Burgundians; and the conquerors of Gaul must yield, in their turn, to the multitude of Saxons and Angles who almost eradicated the idioms of Britain. The modern Italian has been insensibly formed by the mixture of nations: the awkwardness of the barbarians in the nice management of declensions and conjugations, reduced them to the use of articles and auxiliary verbs; and many new ideas have been expressed by Teutonic appellations. Yet the principal stock of technical and familiar words is found to be of Latin derivation; and if we were sufficiently conversant with the obsolete, the rustic, and the municipal dialects of ancient Italy, we should trace the origin of many terms which might, perhaps, be rejected by the classic purity of Rome.

A numerous army constitutes but a small nation, and the powers of the Lombards were soon diminished by the retreat of the twenty thousand Saxons. When Alboin descended from the Alps, he invested his nephew, the first duke of Friuli, with the command of the province and the people; but the prudent Gisulf would have declined the dangerous office, unless he had been permitted to choose, among the nobles of the Lombards, a sufficient number of families to form a perpetual colony of soldiers and subjects. In the progress of conquest, the same option could not be granted to the dukes of Brescia or Bergamo, of Pavia or Turin, of Spoleto or Benevento; but each of these, and each of their colleagues, settled in his appointed district with a band of followers who resorted to his standard in war and his tribunal in peace. Their attachment was free and honourable: resigning the gifts and benefits which they had accepted, they might emigrate with their families into the jurisdiction of another duke; but their absence from the kingdom was punished with death, as a crime of military desertion.

The posterity of the first conquerors struck a deeper root into the soil, which, by every motive of interest and honour, they were bound to defend. A Lombard was born the soldier of his king and his duke; and the civil assemblies of the nation displayed the banners, and assumed the appellation of a regular army. Of this army, the pay and the rewards were drawn from the conquered provinces; and the distribution, which was not effected till after the death of Alboin, is disgraced by the foul marks of injustice and rapine.

Many of the most wealthy Italians were slain or banished; the remainder were divided among the strangers; and a tributary obligation was imposed (under the name of hospitality), of paying to the Lombards a third part of

the fruits of the earth. Within less than seventy years, this artificial system was abolished by a more simple and solid tenure. Either the Roman landlord was expelled by his strong and insolent guest; or the annual payment, a third of the produce, was exchanged by a more equitable transaction for an adequate proportion of landed property. Under these foreign masters, the business of agriculture, in the cultivation of corn, vines, and olives, was exercised with degenerate skill and industry by the labour of the slaves and natives. But the occupations of a pastoral life were more pleasing to the idleness of the barbarians. In the rich meadows of Venetia, they restored and improved the breed of horses for which that province had once been illustrious.

### THE REIGN AND WOOING OF AUTHARI

So rapid was the influence of climate and example, that the Lombards of the fourth generation surveyed with curiosity and affright the portraits of their savage forefathers. Their heads were shaven behind, but the shaggy locks hung over their eyes and mouths, and a long beard represented the name and character of the nation. Their dress consisted of loose linen garments, after the fashion of the Anglo-Saxons, which were decorated, in their opinion, with broad stripes of variegated colours. The legs and feet were clothed in long hose, and open sandals; and even in the security of peace a trusty sword was constantly girt to their side. Yet this strange apparel, and horrid aspect, often concealed a gentle and generous disposition: and as soon as the rage of battle had subsided, the captives and subjects were sometimes surprised by the humanity of the victor. The vices of the Lombards were the effect of passion, of ignorance, of intoxication; their virtues are the more laudable, as they were not affected by the hypocrisy of social manners, nor imposed by the rigid constraint of laws and education. The adventurous gallantry of Authari breathes the true spirit of chivalry and romance. After the loss of his promised bride, a Merovingian princess, he sought in marriage the daughter of the king of Bavaria; and Garibald accepted the alliance of the Italian monarch. Impatient of the slow progress of negotiation, the ardent lover escaped from his palace and visited the court of Bavaria in the train of his own embassy. At the public audience, the unknown stranger advanced to the throne, and informed Garibald that the ambassador was indeed the minister of state, but that he alone was the friend of Authari, who had trusted him with the delicate commission of making a faithful report of the charms of his spouse.

Theudelinda was summoned to undergo this important examination; and after a pause of silent rapture, he hailed her as the queen of Italy, and humbly requested that, according to the custom of the nation, she would present a cup of wine to the first of her new subjects. By the command of her father she obeyed: Authari received the cup in his turn, and, in restoring it to the princess, he secretly touched her hand, and drew his own finger over his face and lips. In the evening, Theudelinda imparted to her nurse the indiscreet familiarity of the stranger, and was comforted by the assurance that such boldness could proceed only from the king, her husband, who, by his beauty and courage, appeared worthy of her love. The ambassadors were dismissed; no sooner did they reach the confines of Italy than Authari, raising himself on his horse, darted his battle-axe against a tree with incomparable strength and dexterity. "Such," said he to the astonished Bavarians, "such are the strokes of the king of the Lombards." On the approach

of a French army, Garibald and his daughter took refuge in the dominions of their ally; and the marriage was consummated in the palace of Verona. At the end of one year, it was dissolved by the death of Authari (Sept. 5th, 590), but the virtues of Theudelinda had endeared her to the nation, and she was permitted to bestow, with her hand, the sceptre of the Italian kingdom.

## LOMBARD GOVERNMENT AND LAW

From this fact, as well as from similar events, it is certain that the Lombards possessed freedom to elect their sovereign, and sense to decline the frequent use of that dangerous privilege. The public revenue arose from the produce of land, and the profits of justice. When the independent dukes agreed that Authari should ascend the throne of his father, they endowed the regal office with a fair moiety of their respective domains. The proudest nobles aspired to the honours of servitude near the person of their prince: he rewarded the fidelity of his vassals by the precarious gift of pensions and "benefices"; and atoned for the injuries of war by the rich foundation of monasteries and churches. In peace a judge, a leader in war, he never usurped the powers of a sole and absolute legislator. The king of Italy convened the national assemblies in the palace, or more probably in the fields of Pavia: his great council was composed of the persons most eminent by their birth and dignities; but the validity, as well as the execution, of their decrees, depended on the approbation of the "faithful" people, the "fortunate" army of the Lombards.

About fourscore years after the conquest of Italy, their traditional customs were transcribed in Teutonic Latin, and ratified by the consent of the prince and people: some new regulations were introduced, more suitable to their present condition; the example of Rothari was imitated by the wisest of his successors, and the laws of the Lombards have been esteemed the least imperfect of the barbaric codes. Secure by their courage in the possession of liberty, these rude and hasty legislators were incapable of balancing the powers of the constitution, or of discussing the nice theory of political government.

Such crimes as threatened the life of the sovereign, or the safety of the state, were adjudged worthy of death; but their attention was principally confined to the defence of the person and property of the subject. According to the strange jurisprudence of the times, the guilt of blood might be redeemed by a fine; yet the high price of nine hundred pieces of gold declares a just sense of the value of a simple citizen. Less atrocious injuries, a wound, a fracture, a blow, an opprobrious word, were measured with scrupulous and almost ridiculous diligence; and the prudence of the legislator encouraged the ignoble practice of bartering honour and revenge for a pecuniary compensation.

The ignorance of the Lombards, in the state of paganism or Christianity, gave implicit credit to the malice and mischief of witchcraft; but the judges of the seventeenth century might have been instructed and confounded by the wisdom of Rothari, who derides the absurd superstition, and protects the wretched victims of popular or judicial cruelty. The same spirit of a legislator, superior to his age and country, may be ascribed to Liutprand, who condemns, while he tolerates, the impious and inveterate abuse of duels, observing from his own experience, that the juster cause had often been oppressed by successful violence.

Whatever merit may be discovered in the laws of the Lombards, they are the genuine fruit of the reason of the barbarians, who never admitted the bishops of Italy to a seat in their legislative councils. But the succession of their kings is marked with virtue and ability; the troubled series of their annals is adorned with fair intervals of peace, order, and domestic happiness, and the Italians enjoyed a milder and more equitable government than any of the other kingdoms which had been founded on the ruins of the Western Empire.

### THE DECAY OF ROME

Amidst the arms of the Lombards, and under the despotism of the Greeks, we again inquire into the fate of Rome, which had reached, about the close of the sixth century, the lowest period of her depression. By the removal of the seat of empire, and the successive loss of the provinces, the sources of public and private opulence were exhausted; the lofty tree under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground. The ministers of command, and the messengers of victory, no longer met on the Appian or Flaminian way; and the hostile approach of the Lombards was often felt, and continually feared. The inhabitants shut or opened their gates with a trembling hand, beheld from the walls the flames of their houses, and heard the lamentations of their brethren, who were coupled together like dogs, and dragged away into distant slavery beyond the sea and the mountains. The Campagna of Rome was speedily reduced to the state of a dreary wilderness, in which the land is barren, the waters are impure, and the air is infectious.

Curiosity and ambition no longer attracted the nations to the capital of the world: but if chance or necessity directed the steps of a wandering stranger, he contemplated with horror the vacancy and solitude of the city, and might be tempted to ask, Where is the senate, and where are the people? In a season of excessive rains, the Tiber swelled above its banks, and rushed with irresistible violence into the valleys of the Seven Hills. A pestilential disease arose from the stagnation of the deluge, and so rapid was the contagion, that fourscore persons expired in an hour, in the midst of a solemn procession which implored the mercy of Heaven.

A society in which marriage is encouraged and industry prevails, soon repairs the accidental losses of pestilence and war; but as the far greater part of the Romans was condemned to hopeless indigence and celibacy, the depopulation was constant and visible, and the gloomy enthusiasts might expect the approaching failure of the human race. Yet the number of citizens still exceeded the measure of subsistence: their precarious food was supplied from the harvests of Sicily or Egypt; and the frequent repetition of famine betrays the inattention of the emperor to a distant province. The edifices of Rome were exposed to the same ruin and decay; the mouldering fabrics were easily overthrown by inundations, tempests, and earthquakes; and the monks, who had occupied the most advantageous stations, exulted in their base triumph over the ruins of antiquity.

It is commonly believed, that Pope Gregory I attacked the temples, and mutilated the statues, of the city; that by the command of the barbarian, the Palatine library was reduced to ashes; and that the history of Livy was the peculiar mark of his absurd and mischievous fanaticism. The writings of Gregory himself reveal his implacable aversion to the monuments of classic

genius: and he points his severest censure against the profane learning of a bishop, who taught the art of grammar, studied the Latin poets, and pronounced with the same voice the praises of Jupiter and those of Christ. But the evidence of his destructive rage is doubtful and recent; the temple of Peace, or the theatre of Marcellus, have been demolished by the slow operation of ages, and a formal proscription would have multiplied the copies of Virgil and Livy in the countries which were not subject to the ecclesiastical dictator.

Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle, which again restored her to honour and dominion.[w]

## THE LOMBARD KINGS (636-712 A.D.)

Theudelinda had chosen for her husband and co-ruler, the Thuringian duke Agilulf who reigned from 590 to 615. Under these two the Arian Lombards kept peace with the Catholic church, and Pope Gregory the Great, who is more fully treated under the history of the papacy, deserves honour for arranging the peace and preventing a conspiracy to massacre the Lombards as the French were butchered on the day of the Sicilian Vespers.

Agilulf was followed by Adalwald (Adeloald), 615–624, and he by Ariwald (Arioald), 624–636, who was followed by Rothari (636–652).[a]

From the time when Rothari established the Lombard monarchy by his strong hand, to the reign of Liutprand, the first king who deliberately conceived the design of uniting the whole of Italy under his sceptre, the throne of Pavia passed through many vicissitudes, and the monarchy could only maintain its authority with difficulty against the power of the aspiring nobles, and of the dukes in particular. Rodwald, the son of Rothari, having been assassinated, after a reign of barely six months (652), by a Lombard whom he had grievously insulted, loyalty to the memory of Queen Theudelinda led the nation to set her nephew Aribert, the son of Gundwald of Asti, on the throne. The reign of this monarch (653–661), the first Catholic king of the Lombards, is shrouded in obscurity. According to the dispositions made by him on his deathbed, his two youthful sons, Godebert and Perctarit, were to divide his dominions, one fixing his capital at Pavia and the other at Milan. The consequence of this ill-judged arrangement was a fratricidal civil war. Both belligerents appealed for aid to Grimwald, duke of Benevento, and thus gave this powerful and ambitious ruler the opportunity of placing the crown on his own head (662–671). He entered Pavia as the ally of Godebert; but seized the first favourable moment to murder the young king. Thereupon Perctarit of Milan, the other brother, dreading a like fate for himself, fled to the Avars, leaving his wife Rodelinda and his infant son Cuninebert behind him.

Grimwald, who had married the daughter of Aribert, then ruled the Lombard kingdom for ten years with vigour and prudence, and successfully repelled the attacks of the Franks on the west and of the Greeks on the east. When a Lombard duke, Lupus of Friuli by name, refused to swear allegiance to him, he instigated the chagan of the Avars to make war on the recalcitrant noble. The disloyal governor and the majority of his comrades in arms fell in a four days' battle against the barbarians (663). The Avars, however, obstinately refused to evacuate the territory which they had purchased with their blood. Grimwald was forced to muster an army to coerce them, but

he avoided giving battle and ultimately succeeded by artifice in inducing his savage visitors to withdraw. In order to secure himself against revolt and disloyalty for the future, he conferred the most important dukedoms on his own adherents and friends, taking care to bestow the municipal territories (*civitates*) upon persons who were not native to the respective cities and so had no ties to the soil. Accordingly Benevento fell to the share of his son Romwald; Spoleto to his faithful comrade Transamund, on whom he also bestowed his daughter in marriage; and the duchy of Friuli to Wechtari of Vicenza.

Grimwald was nevertheless unable to secure the crown for his own line. Death had barely closed the formidable monarch's eyes before Perctarit was conducted from the frontier to Pavia and proclaimed king amidst loud rejoicings, while Garibald, Grimwald's son, disappeared from the scene. Of Perctarit's subsequent reign (671–686), in which he associated his son Cunincbert (686–700) with him in the government, we know nothing except that he waged a protracted war with Alahis, duke of Trient, who had rebelled against him. After the death of Perctarit the struggle took a turn so unfavourable to the royal cause that Alahis, who in the meantime had added the duchy of Brescia to that of Trient, marched into Pavia, forced the king to take refuge on an island in Lake Como, and proclaimed himself king. His reign was brief. Desertion and treachery weakened his cause, and he fell in a decisive battle against Cunincbert not far from Como. Cunincbert then took up his residence once more in the royal palace at Pavia.

### DECLINE OF THE LOMBARD KINGDOM

Under Cunincbert's son Liutbert, who succeeded as a minor under the guardianship of Duke Ansprand, the kingdom of Lombardy fell on evil days. Raginbert, the son of Godebert, a scion of the royal house, who had risen in the reign of Cunincbert to the rank of Duke of Turin, now advanced pretensions to the throne. Ansprand and his ally, Rothari of Bergamo, were defeated on the field of Novara, where the fortunes of Italy have so often been decided. Raginbert did not long survive his victory; but his son Aribert maintained his claims and won a second victory over the opposite party at Pavia. Ansprand escaped to the island in Lake Como where Cunincbert had formerly found refuge; the young king fell into the hands of the victors. Rothari withdrew to his own duchy of Bergamo, but expiated his short-lived dream of sovereignty (for he had aspired to the throne himself) by an untimely death in prison at Turin. The ill-starred Liutbert was murdered in his bath about the same time, and Ansprand was forced to leave his last refuge on Italian soil and flee across the Alps.

Aribert now reigned at Pavia without a rival (701–712). But strenuously as he strove to curb the power of the dukes and to win popularity by the justice of his administration, he was unable to maintain his sovereignty. For eight years Ansprand had waited in vain at the court of the duke of Bavaria for the aid he desired. In the ninth it was granted. He entered upper Italy at the head of an imposing force "to set upon his own head the crown he had not been able to keep for his ward." Aribert, though not defeated in the field, lost heart and absconded to Pavia. A mutiny arose in the army in consequence, the king's life seemed to be in danger, and he resolved upon flight. He tried to swim the Ticino, but the weight of the gold he had taken with him dragged him down and he was drowned. The reins

of government were then assumed (712) by Ansprand, "a man of conspicuous valour and rare wisdom." He had only three months to enjoy the good fortune for which he had striven so long; but on his death-bed he had the joy of seeing his son Liutprand raised to the throne and acknowledged king in a solemn assembly of the people.[x]

## REIGN OF LIUTPRAND (712–744 A.D.)

Between the 6th and 13th of June, 712, which is the date, as nearly as we can fix it, when Flavius Liutprand came to the throne, he was, according to all records, in the prime of his manhood. He took to wife a Bavarian princess, Guntrud, the child of Theudibert, who bore him a daughter, their only offspring. The exact time of his marriage is not known. It took place not long after Aribert of the Cottian Alps made his donation to the Roman church; the year in which Gregory II became pope. If this circumstance is taken in connection with the fact that between 715–716 the Bavarian duke, Theodo I (Theudibert's father), undertook a journey to Rome, highly important to the clerical interests of Bavaria, it cannot be doubted that this duke, whose house had so long been allied in friendship with Liutprand, must have tarried in Pavia to see the king, and that at this interview the further tie of a marriage alliance was first discussed.

The intimate relations between the Bavarians and Lombards lasted up to a late period; they were at one time neighbours in Pannonia, and earlier still there are authenticated accounts of their being related as is shown by the close resemblance in their customs and speech. Most of our information drawn from the earliest Bavarian chronicles, we owe to Paulus,[y] the historian of the Lombards. Even before these latter wandered into Italy the marriage of Walderada, widow of Theudebald of Austrasia and daughter of the Lombard Wacho, had taken place with Garibald, the first duke of Bavaria, under whose reign that country became in fact a dependency of France.

The earlier theory that the Bavarians were once among the Alboin peoples has, it is true, been energetically opposed, but, as the author of this history believes, without grounds. Even as far back as the three kings in Italy, Authari took to wife a Bavarian princess, the much-chronicled Theudelinda, who gave to the kingdom a new dynasty, — if such a word can be used in speaking of the Lombards — and to a certain extent, a new faith.

Many traces are to be found of the subsequent intercourse between the two races, but a close and really important connection did not, so far as can be discovered from the scanty sources of information at our disposal, occur until the time of King Ansprand.

Theodo I had divided his country into five parts, of which he kept one for himself, assigning the remaining four divisions to his four sons — Theudibert, Grimwald, Tassilo II, and Theodobald. Rudhart's supposition was that Theudibert, with whom the Lombards came almost exclusively into touch, kept the south division, adjoining Liutprand's kingdom, together with the see of Salzburg.

After Theodobald's early death his inheritance fell to his surviving brothers; and the same was the case with Theodo's land after his death in 717 or in 722.

In the year 724 Theudibert also died. He seems to have exercised a kind of supremacy over his brother. He left behind him a son, Hucpert,

brother-in-law to Liutprand; when, as presently happened, Grimwald wished to make himself supreme ruler in Bavaria, and to overthrow Hucpert, he turned to his neighbours over the border for help. He received it, and it was on this occasion that Liutprand built some forts on the Etsch (Adige).

## LIUTPRAND AND MARTEL

The wanderings of the Bavarian dukes had given another powerful neighbour, Charles Martel, the ruler of the Franks, the opportunity of interfering with them. There are proofs that friendly intercourse existed between the Franks and the Lombards, even before the latter migrated to Italy. Theudebert I, one of the few descendants of Clovis who has left an honourable name in history, was wedded to Wisigarda, a daughter of King Wacho, whose second daughter, Walderada, was the first wife of Theudebald, the illegitimate son of the successor of Theudebert. All friendly relations between these two peoples ceased with Alboin, who, before he married the notorious Rosamund, took to wife a daughter of Clotair I, named either Clotosuinda or Flutswinda, and after his time we find them opposed and hostile to one another. At first during the years 568, 571, 572, 574, and 575, there were only insignificant battles, brought about by the incursions of the Lombard tribes who were not yet settled in the Frankish territory. More serious, and not exactly conducive to fame or success for the Franks, were the wars which Childebert II, in pursuance of an agreement made by him with the East Roman emperor, himself conducted against Authari down to the year 590. It was only under Agilulf that peace was actually secured in 591.

In 605, in connection with the marriage of King Adalwald with a daughter of Theudebert II, a bond of "everlasting peace between the Franks and Lombards" was sworn to. We are also told by Paulus that King Grimwald almost completely annihilated a Frankish host, which had passed from Provence into upper Italy, but no exact date is furnished. It was only when under the strong rule of the first Carlovingians on the one hand and of Liutprand on the other, when order was to some extent restored in both kingdoms, that the two rulers once more approached one another with a view to the discussion of a foreign policy. In 725 Charles Martel undertook his first campaign, in order to put the Bavarians in mind of their long-forgotten dependence on the Franks. There are no chronicles which tell us whether or not Liutprand then came into communication with his great contemporary. But it is certain that a good understanding existed between them in the years which followed, a friendship which only grew closer with time. This is proved chiefly by the fact that Charles Martel, in his thirties, sent his youthful son Pepin (born 714 or 715) to the Lombard king that the king might cut off his hair "according to the custom." This Liutprand did, assuming by this act the place of second father to the young man, afterwards sending him home, enriched by many presents. According to two later chroniclers Charles had then already concluded an alliance with Liutprand, an assertion which the historian has rather deduced from later occurrences, than based upon any exact knowledge of the actual facts.

When the Saracens again invaded Gaul, and had pushed on into Provence, Charles sent envoys bearing presents to Liutprand, and asked him for assistance, which was granted. The report of a Lombard army in the neighbourhood was sufficient to induce the "unbelievers," who had reached the valley of Susa, to retreat, and to the abandonment of Arles (Arelate).

### LIUTPRAND AND THE ITALIAN POWERS

The expeditions to Bavaria and France are the only ones Liutprand undertook outside of Italy. Even within the peninsula his predecessors had not left him very much to do. The change of rulers repeatedly enforced in the second half of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth century was, of course, anything but advantageous to the aggrandisement of the Lombard royal house. The leading forces in the country, the dukes, whose power dated from the earliest monarchical times in Italy, made what use they could of the internecine discord to assert their own authority.

At the extreme point of independence of the crown stood the Beneventine dukes, who from time immemorial had maintained a unique position in the south, being indeed recognised by constitutional law as almost independent of the kingly power. They traced back their origin to royal blood, to Duke Gisulf of Friuli, a brother of Alboin.

In 731 Liutprand found an opportunity to interfere in Beneventine affairs. He came in person to Benevento, and took away with him his grand-nephew who was not of age, whilst in his place he installed his nephew Gregory, leaving him peacefully established before he returned.

Gregory, after a reign of about seven years, met his death by violence in 738. By this time the opponents in south Lombardy had chosen a duke for themselves in the person of the otherwise unknown Gottschalk. Whether he had any connection and if so, of what kind, with the native princely house is not to be learned from any of the records. According to Paulus[P] he ruled for three years, 738 or 739 to 742. In the last year, as Liutprand having completely subjugated Spoleto betook himself to an expedition against Benevento, Gottschalk was attacked by the Beneventines, who were hostile to him, and killed. Thus Liutprand on his arrival found his way clear, and placed his great-nephew, now grown to man's estate, upon the ducal throne as Gisulf II. He then returned to Pavia, and from that time had no occasion to interfere further in Benevento. In Spoleto a similar state of things was the consequence of similar circumstances.

The Friulian princes owe their distinguished position to the province which Alboin "lent to his cousin Gisulf, his *marpahis*," and which was occupied by the flower of the Lombard warriors, and more particularly owing to the circumstance that it formed the frontier which was so much exposed to the attacks of the Avars. After the frightful defeat, which Gisulf had once sustained from the Avars, the Lombards bore themselves manfully under constantly recurring attacks; the sons and successors of the first dukes, Taso and Cacco, succeeding in extending their territory as far as what was afterwards called the Windisch boundary-land, the Slav inhabitants of which paid tribute to Friuli up to the time of the duke Ratchis. A second great defeat which Duke Ferdulf suffered at the turn of the seventh century seemed to have no further consequences.

Not long after Ferdulf's death, which was followed by a short interregnum, Pemmo, father of two kings of widely different characters, King Ratchis and Aistulf, received the dukedom from Aribert II. His reign seems to have been a long one, extending over forty years — that is, far into the time of Liutprand. His first endeavour was to heal the wounds which Ferdulf's rashness had inflicted upon his country. By a victory in the neighbourhood of Villach he succeeded in sending home a newly arrived tribe of Slavs (Avars) after they had been severely punished. He concluded a peace with his enemy, who from that time forward cherished a salutary

respect for the Friulian arms. In later years, however, by his conflict with Callistus, patriarch of Aquileia, he drew on himself the serious displeasure of the king which eventually led to the loss of his dukedom. Till then, the patriarchs, not being secure in their own dominions from the enmity of the East Romans, had always resided at Cormona, but Callistus, who was a "very elegant nobleman" and moreover a particular favourite of Liutprand, who had assisted him to the attainment of his dignity, found the residence of his predecessors in authority too undistinguished, and decided to remove to Friuli, which appeared to him far more suitable. Unfortunately, there already resided here, with the consent of the dukes, the bishop of the neighbouring Tulia Carnica, whose see was at that time held by Amator. The ambitious, high-spirited patriarch drove him, without ceremony, from his own house, and coolly took possession of it. Pemmo, who witnessed this proceeding, but with great disfavour, was not prepared to allow such a thing to happen in his own town. He arrested Callistus, whose life was for some time in danger, kept him in prison, and "let him eat the bread of sorrow." When Liutprand was informed of the oppression of one of his protégés he took energetic measures, deposed the reigning duke and installed in his stead, Ratchis, the duke's elder son.

Soon after his appointment, he undertook a successful expedition to devastate the Slav population in Carinthia, with the intention of giving them a warning against any invasion of his territory. With this our information concerning the history of Friuli during the reign of Liutprand comes to an end.

### LIUTPRAND, THE POPE, AND CONSTANTINOPLE

When Liutprand came to the throne, Peter Constantine was pope at Rome (708–715) and appeared to have no relations with the Lombard king. The first hint of any communication between the two powers relates to a donation of ecclesiastical properties from the Cottian Alps, which King Aribert II had once made to Pope John VII (705–707) and which Liutprand, on his accession, now confirmed to Constantine I, after whose death the gift was revoked, but finally, on the request of Gregory II, again renewed.

Somewhere about this year (717–718) may be dated the first split between the East Romans and the Lombards, and indeed it was the Beneventines who were responsible for the first hostilities. It appears that Constantinople possessed a not inconsiderable district in the heart of the Benevento territory, a duchy which comprised among other towns Naples, Amalfi, Sorrento, Misenum, Puteoli, and Cumæ. In a time of peace, Romwald II seized upon the last-named town which was fortified and therefore of some importance. Gregory II, who at this time, previous to the dispute about iconoclasm, was well disposed towards the Byzantines, interposed with argument, threats of displeasure, and demands for restitution, but in vain. Finally he induced the Greek duke, John of Naples, to intervene, which was from the first his obvious duty. John marched into Cumæ in the dead of night and took possession of the place; three hundred Lombards, among them one Gastald, met their death, and five hundred were led captive to Naples. As a reward Gregory gave John of Naples 70 pounds in gold, which he had promised him if he would undertake the business.

Liutprand was not personally affected by this proceeding, as Benevento had at that time nothing to do with the Lombard kingdom and existed as an independent duchy.

[712-728 A.D.]

Since the open outbreak of the quarrel about the images, (as described previously under the history of Leo the Isaurian and more fully under the papacy), however, he showed himself inimical first to the extension of the emperor's possessions in Italy, and in pursuance of the same policy, to Rome as well, which nominally at least was still under imperial rule.

The sides taken in the conflicts which followed, although varying from time to time, may be given briefly as follows: On one side Liutprand against East Rome — the lawful emperor and he never being on friendly terms; on the other the pope — an unequivocal enemy to the emperor ever since the image quarrel, but none the less no sincere ally of the Lombard king, whose ever-extending power he worked in every way to counteract, whilst keeping on the alert lest his machinations to this end should advance the Byzantine interests. He also, when occasion offered, called in the aid of the Beneventine and Spoletine dukes.

COAT OF MAIL OF A KING IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY

The conflict was initiated by Liutprand at a time highly favourable to his main desire which, there can be no doubt, was that all Italy should be united into one kingdom under a Lombard king, — namely in the year 726, when by his energetic attack upon the iconodules in his own territory, the emperor had raised about him an atmosphere of bitterness and insurrection, had especially made a lasting enemy of the bishop in Rome who was regarded by western Europe as the head of the Christian church and was by no means in a position to combat the rebellions in his Italian provinces, or to keep his unwilling vassals under his empire. All these circumstances combined to help Liutprand in his enterprise — the extension of his own power at the cost of that of the empire. No one could have understood better how to turn the mistakes made in Rome and Constantinople to account.

About 726 the Lombards possessed themselves of the fortified town of Narnia (Narni), which at that time belonged to Eastern Rome. After that Liutprand himself marched at the head of the united forces of his kingdom (*generali motione facta*) upon Ravenna, the centre of the Byzantine power in Italy. After a siege lasting many days he succeeded at least in taking Classis, the port of Ravenna, which he destroyed, after sacking it with great profit to himself.

The emperor, instead of yielding to Gregory II, at least in appearance, and so securing his assistance in resisting the encroachments made by Liutprand, still further widened the gulf between the pope and himself by his stubborn and ungracious demeanour. The consequences were not slow to follow. Even if the many attempts against his life and position described

in the biography of the pope are rather imaginary (and due to the dread felt in Rome of Leo III) than attacks which actually occurred, they nevertheless give us the right idea of the temper in Rome at that time; there is no doubt that the appointment of a new pope favoured by the emperor and who might be removed to Constantinople, was contemplated in Italy. The fact of a later successful understanding between the two, such as Gregorovius[aa] and Schlosser[bb] would have us accept, has no authenticated probability. In 728–729 Liutprand and Eutychius were still acting in concert against the pope and his friends; and the imperial edict of 728, wherein "all images of angels, saints, and martyrs were proscribed under penalties" shows no inclination towards reconciliation. Whether the Lombards, who defended the pope at the Ponte Salario against the forces of Eutychius and the exarch Paulus, which were approaching to depose him from the papal chair, acted under instructions from Liutprand, or from Transamund II, duke of Spoleto, or on their own initiative, we cannot discover from the *Vita Gregorii*,[z] which contains the record.

Accordingly whilst a state of great confusion and warfare prevailed both in the east and west of Italy, as well as in the district surrounding Naples, Liutprand continued his victorious career.

To favour the Greeks was not his idea, so long as the pope gave him no offence; moreover he had a certain awe of the church, and of its head, which he never uprooted from his inner nature. Besides, his situation, independent of both sides and therefore alternately feared and courted by both, was the best possible for facilitating the execution of his ambitious and far-reaching projects.

In September of the year 727 till September 728 he addressed himself to a neighbourhood quite dangerously in the vicinity of Rome, seizing the town of Sutrium (Sutri), which, like the strip of country between the dukedoms of Spoleto and Tuscany was not yet incorporated with the Lombard kingdom. By dint of much persuasion and still more gold, he consented 140 days later to return this piece of territory, and leave the pope in possession, "the first presentation of a town to the church"—"the first germ of the pontifical state outside the walls of Rome."

The following year after the subjection already mentioned, of Spoleto and Benevento, he followed Eutychius against Rome, and encamped on the Neronian meadows to the great dismay of the inhabitants. Nevertheless the matter was conducted to a peaceable issue. After a touching conference with Gregory II the Lombard king not only commenced no hostilities, but showed all possible respect to the papal throne, at the same time cautioning the pope to place himself on a better footing with Eutychius, and his (Liutprand's) other allies. For this reason the idea of a serious alliance having existed between Liutprand and the emperor cannot be entertained.

Not long after, on the 11th of February, 731, Gregory II died. Under the rule of his successor, Gregory III, an enthusiastic image-worshipper, whose life in the *Liber Pontificalis*[z] is very scantily and unsatisfactorily told, "the Roman district was brought under the control of the accursed Lombards, under the king Liutprand himself," a sentence which must not, of course, be taken literally, and which unfortunately stands without further explanation.

Probably the decade in which Gregory III sat on the stool of St. Peter, was the period during which these events took place which are related by Paulus Diaconus[p] only. To give an even moderately correct chronology of the sequence of events would be a hopeless endeavour. The battles against the East Romans which are here mentioned, are confined to those in the

[738-740 A.D.]

exarchate of Ravenna. Wherever the king himself led the fight, he always came off victor (according to Paulus), whilst in his absence the Lombards sustained many rebuffs. In the last year of Gregory III the complications between Rome and Liutprand assumed a very serious aspect, the intervention of the pope in Lombard affairs, which were purely secular, costing him dear.

It now appears to have been only by lavish expenditure that he was able to establish a friendly understanding. The fortress Gallese, north of Nepi on the Tiber, till now the object of so much desire, was resigned by Spoleto to the Ducatus Romanus, *i.e.*, nominally to the East Roman kingdom, but in reality to the Patrimonium Petri. We have definite information that a formal treaty followed between the pope on the one side and the dukes of Spoleto and Benevento on the other, with the express purpose of restoring and protecting the autonomous rights of the dukes and safe-guarding both the eastern and western possessions of the pope from the clutches of Liutprand.

When, therefore, in 738, the king commenced a campaign in the Roman district in which the neighbourhood, particularly the church property in it, was not spared, the two dukes refused to answer the summons of Liutprand to follow and take part in the spoliation. Thereupon Liutprand abandoned the idea of Rome, and marched next against the insurrectionary duke of Spoleto through the devastated territory of Campania. Transamund did not venture to make any stand against him, but fled in the direction of Rome to Gregory III. Hilderic was promoted by the king to be duke in his stead, and assumed control, probably during June, 739. Liutprand next appealed urgently to the pope for the surrender of the insurrectionary vassals, but, as might have been expected, without success, Patricius the East Roman, and Duke Stephanus the commander of the troops in the Roman duchy both setting themselves in keen opposition to Liutprand's desires. The latter avenged himself by seizing four towns. After accomplishing this as well as a siege of the Holy City, he returned in August, 739, to Pavia. A letter, the second written by Gregory III in 739 to Charles Martel, which has been preserved, gives a description of the poverty and anxiety in the Papal dominions, and is a veritable masterpiece of the meanest perfidy, in which he adjures Charles Martel by the keys of the Holy Sepulchre, which he had presented to him, to lend his help and strength against the dreaded Liutprand.

Scarcely had the king withdrawn when Transamund II, aided by the troops of the Roman duchy which were left with him in the confidence that he would regain the towns lost to the Romans, applied himself to re-assuming the sovereign power. The entire Roman military force invaded the dukedom of Spoleto in two columns, one town after another surrendered after a short resistance, and in December, 739, Transamund entered his capital in state; Hilderic being removed by murder. "And at this time there was a great disquietude among the Lombardians, as the Beneventines and Spoletines allied themselves with the Romans."

Now that Transamund again felt himself in some measure secure in his duchy it was in vain that the pope and Patricius admonished him to fulfil his promise, and wrest from the king the four towns which had been lost through his means. The endeavour was next made to gain possession of them by friendly means, through the mediation of the Lombardian bishop, to whom on the 15th of October, 740, Gregory III despatched a pressing letter. All was in vain. Already there were new portents of evil, already Liut-

prand was arming himself for a new campaign against Rome, when, before the storm broke, came the death of Gregory III on the 29th of November, 741, five weeks after Charles Martel, five months after the emperor Leo III, the Isaurian, his implacable foe; Zacharias, his successor, consecrated on December 3rd, being left behind to quench the fire want of foresight had allowed to break out.

Zacharias, a Greek, and, as his chronicler[2] tells us, an unusually mild and virtuous ruler, was wise enough to see that, with a man of Liutprand's character, the sensible and most advantageous course was to get upon good terms.

The new pope, not long after his consecration, sent a legation to Pavia, whose special mission was to negotiate the restitution of the four towns which two years previously had been wrung from the Roman duchy. Liutprand put no great difficulties in the way, and promised the desired concession. In exchange he demanded that the pope should place the Roman troops at his disposal for the campaign he was planning to subdue the faithless Transamund. By this combination Transamund was bereft of all hope that he might be able to maintain his position. He saw himself that there was nothing more to be done, and, renouncing all thought of resistance marched to meet Liutprand to whom he yielded himself captive. It is probable that he intended by this voluntary submission to appeal once more to the king's gentle disposition. But Liutprand dared make no second attempt to rely upon the faith of his vanquished enemy, and Transamund found himself consigned to a cloister. Liutprand's nephew took, probably some few years later, the place thus left vacant. Gottschalk's exit from Benevento, which according to Paulus followed close upon Transamund's, has been already related. All this occurred between February and September, 742. Thus the unity of the kingdom of Lombardy was at length restored, and an end put to the arrogant insubordination of the crown vassals.

A Friar, Eighth Century

### PEACE WITH ROME

No haste was evinced in Pavia to carry out the promised restitution of the four towns, this tardiness causing the pope great concern. In order to put an end to this uncertainty, and find out whether there really was any chance of the matter being amicably arranged, Zacharias, "like a true shepherd of the flock entrusted to him by God," set out from the Holy City at the head of his spiritual cortège and marched "full of confidence and brave in heart" to the charmingly situated Interamna (Terni), at that time the headquarters of the Lombards, in order to try what his personal influence would do towards effecting the desired arrangement. Liutprand showed him all honour. "Moved by the pious speech, and full of admiration for the firm courage and admonitions of the holy man," Liutprand conceded everything he asked, "thanks to the influence

[743–744 A.D.]

of the Holy Spirit," and gave the four disputed towns, which he had taken on account of the Transamund quarrel, together with their inhabitants, as a present to the church of Holy Peter.

It is noticeable that, as Gregorovius[aa] points out, this restitution did not at all effect the Byzantine emperor, but only the successor of Peter. And in order that the pope might enjoy complete ease of mind, he was further guaranteed a twenty years' peace. To gratify him Liutprand even set free all the Greek and Roman prisoners of war he had taken in Tuscany and in the territory north of the river Po, amongst whom were men of high rank, such as the consuls Sergius, Leo, Victor, and Agnellus. Thus a final reconciliation was effected, the conditions of which were all Rome could possibly desire.

On the same day the Sunday, after the solemn celebration of the mass, the pope invited his royal friend to his table in order that he, the pope, might impart the apostolic blessing. Liutprand ate on this occasion with such a hearty appetite as to call forth the jovial remark from him that he had never before eaten so well at a midday meal. The next day, Monday, they bade each other farewell.

Liutprand now turned his attention in another direction. The quarrels about the throne, in which the successor to Leo III, Emperor Constantine V (Copronymus), was embroiled with his brother-in-law Artavasdes, incited him to a renewed attack upon the East Roman possession in Italy. The Ravenna district felt the weight of his displeasure, and he found all preparations made for laying siege a second time to the principal town, when Patricius, the exarch Eutychius, and the archbishop John of Ravenna with the people of that city, sought the mediation of the pope, first by letter and then through envoys.

On the 28th of June, 743, the pope reached the river Po. Here he was met by the high vassals of the Lombard crown and conducted to their capital.

The pope disburdened his mind of his desire that the king would not further oppress the province of Ravenna by devastation and yet further that he would restore the towns taken from the Ravenna including the fortress of Cesena. The naïveté of such demands is certainly astonishing, but still more amazing are the unknown circumstances which induced Liutprand to concede so much. At first, it is true, he met them with a stout refusal. But what remained for him, if he would avoid the open conflict he dreaded with the church and its consequences, except submission, unless he sacrificed the security and peace of his realm, the result of years of activity in extending his foreign dominion? In spite of his promise given to the pope, Liutprand appears to have continued harassing the exarchate.

In January, 744, after a reign of thirty-one years and seven months, Liutprand concluded his eventful life. He was buried in the church of St. Adrian, where his father too had found his last resting-place. In the year 1173 his bones were removed to the church of St. Peter's monastery, so often referred to as "Ecclesia di Ciel d'Oro," a monastery which owed its existence to him.[y]

### HODGKIN'S ESTIMATE OF LIUTPRAND

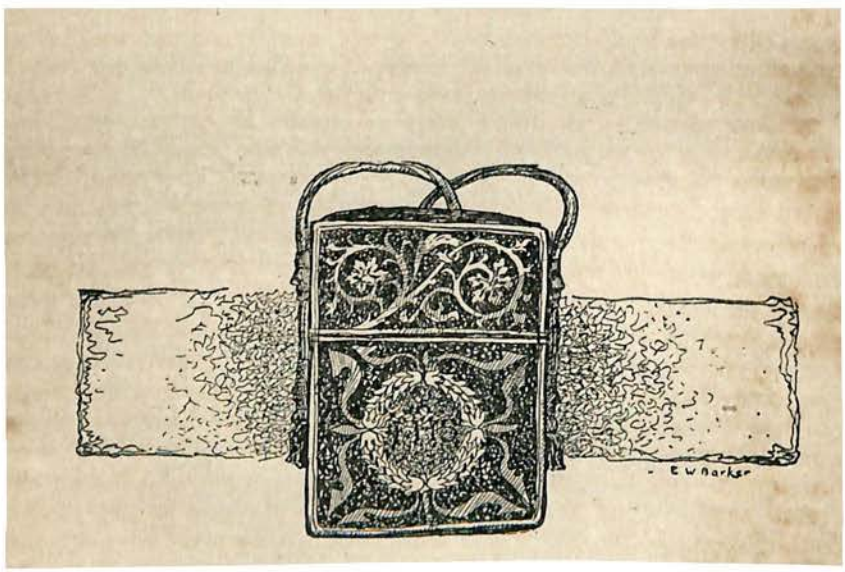
Hodgkin[b] is inclined to take issue with the high appraisals that have been made of Liutprand's statesmanship. It is admitted, however, that Liutprand pursued with unwavering consistency and with no small success the policy of consolidating the monarchy and subordinating the great dukes to the crown.

But some lack of statesmanship was shown in dealing with the popes, who could usually prevail upon him to abandon an enterprise in conquest by appealing to his "devotion to St. Peter." Policy and a truly devout temperament, Hodgkin thinks, worked together to prevent Liutprand from doing anything that might cause a rupture with the Holy See.

This estimate seems in many ways a just one, but it contains an unfortunate ambiguity in that it fails to attempt a decision as to what share "devout temperament" played against "policy" in determining Liutprand's relations with the see of Rome. On that question, seemingly, would hinge the decision as to the real force and stability of Liutprand's character. But doubtless it was the part of wisdom to leave the question unanswered. Here, as so often elsewhere, it is impossible for posterity to adjudge properly a man's motives. It may be added, however, that Hodgkin quotes with seeming approval the characterisation of Liutprand by the "loving yet faithful hand of Paulus Diaconus," a contemporary whose history is the chief original source of our knowledge of this period.[a]

"He was a man of great wisdom, prudent in counsel and a lover of peace, mighty in war, clement towards offenders, chaste, modest, one who prayed through the night-watches, generous in his almsgiving, ignorant it is true of literature, but a man who might be compared to the philosophers, a fosterer of his people, an augmenter of their laws."

For the present we must leave the fortunes of the Lombards to trace the origins and the rise of the Frankish people who now loom large across the horizon of Italy and to whom the papacy appeals for help against the powers that threaten its enormous and greedy ambition.[a]



# CHAPTER III

## THE FRANKS TO THE TIME OF CHARLES MARTEL

[55 B.C.–732 A.D.]

IT is well known that the name of "Frank" is not to be found in the long list of German tribes preserved to us in the *Germania* of Tacitus.[b] Little or nothing is heard of them before the reign of Gordian III. In 240 A.D. Aurelian,[1] then a tribune of the sixth legion stationed on the Rhine, encountered a body of marauding Franks near Mogontiacum, and drove them back into their marshes. The word "Francia" is also found at a still earlier date, in the old Roman chart called the *Charta Peutingeria*, and occupies on the map the right bank of the Rhine from opposite Coblenz to the sea. The origin of the Franks has been the subject of frequent debate, to which French patriotism has occasionally lent some asperity. At the time when they first appear in history, the Romans had neither the taste nor the means for historical research, and we are therefore obliged to depend in a great measure upon conjecture and combination. It has been disputed whether the word "Frank" was the original designation of a tribe, which by a change of habitation emerged at the period above mentioned into the light of history, or that of a new league, formed for some common object of aggression or defence by nations hitherto familiar to us under other names.

We can in this place do little more than refer to a controversy, the value and interest of which has been rendered obsolete by the progress of historical investigation. The darkness and void of history have as usual been filled with spectral theories, which vanish at the challenge of criticism and before the gradually increasing light of knowledge.

We need hardly say that the origin of the Franks has been traced to fugitive colonists from Troy; for what nation under heaven has not sought to connect itself, in some way or other, with the glorified heroes of the immortal

[1 His soldiers sang a song which Vopiscus[c] quotes:

"*Mille Sarmatas, mille Francos, semel et semel occidimus*
*Mille mille mille mille mille Persas quærimus.*"

This song which became a street song in Rome is perhaps the first appearance of the name in Roman history.]

song? Nor is it surprising that French writers, desirous of transferring from the Germans to themselves the honours of the Frankish name, should have made of them a tribe of Gauls, whom some unknown cause had induced to settle in Germany, and who afterwards sought to recover their ancient country from the Roman conquerors. At the present day, however, historians of every nation, including the French, are fairly agreed in considering the Franks as a powerful confederacy of German tribes, who in the time of Tacitus inhabited the northwestern parts of Germany bordering on the Rhine. And this theory is so well supported by many scattered notices, slight in themselves but powerful when combined, that we can only wonder that it should ever have been called in question. Nor was this aggregation of tribes under the new name of Franks a singular instance; the same took place in the case of the Alamanni and Saxons.

The actuating causes of these new unions are unknown. They may be sought for either in external circumstances, such as the pressure of powerful enemies from without, or in an extension of their own desires and plans, requiring the command of greater means, and inducing a wider co-operation of those whose similarity of language and character rendered it most easy for them to unite. But perhaps we need look no further for an efficient cause than the spirit of amalgamation which naturally arises among tribes of kindred race and language, when their growing numbers, and an increased facility of moving from place to place, bring them into more frequent contact. The same phenomenon may be observed at certain periods in the history of almost every nation, and the spirit which gives rise to it has generally been found strong enough to overcome the force of particular interests and petty nationalities.

The etymology of the name adopted by the new confederacy is also uncertain. The conjecture which has most probability in its favour is that adopted long ago by Gibbon,[d] and confirmed in recent times by the authority of Grimm,[e] which connects it with the German word *frank* (free). The derivation preferred by Adelung[f] from *frak* (in modern German *frech*, bold), with the inserted nasal, differs from that of Grimm only in appearance. No small countenance is given to this derivation by the constant recurrence in after times of the epithet *truces*, *feroces*, which the Franks were so fond of applying to themselves, and which they certainly did everything to deserve. Tacitus[b] speaks of nearly all the tribes, whose various appellations were afterwards merged in that of Frank, as living in the neighbourhood of the Rhine. Of these the principal were the Sugambri (the chief people of the old Istævonian tribe), who, as there is reason to believe, were identical with the Salian Franks. The confederation further comprised the Bructeri, the Chamavi, Ansibarii, Tubantes, Marsi, and Chasuari, of whom the five last had formerly belonged to the celebrated Cheruscan league, which, under the hero Arminius, destroyed three Roman legions in the Teutoburg forest.

The strongest evidence of the identity of these tribes with the Franks, is the fact that, long after their settlement in Gaul, the distinctive names of the original people were still occasionally used as synonymous with that of the confederation. The Sugambri [or Sicambri] are known in Roman history for their active and enterprising spirit, and the determined opposition which they offered to the greatest generals of Rome. It was on their account that Cæsar bridged the Rhine in the neighbourhood of Bonn, and spent eighteen days, as he informs us with significant minuteness, on the German side of that river. Drusus made a similar attempt against them with little better success. Tiberius was the first who obtained any decided advantage over

them; and even he, by his own confession, was obliged to have recourse to treachery. An immense number of them were then transported by the command of Augustus to the left bank of the Rhine, "that," as the panegyrist expresses it, "they might be compelled to lay aside not only their arms but their ferocity." That they were not, however, even then so utterly destroyed or expatriated as the flatterers of the emperor would have us believe, is evident from the fact that they appear again under the same name, in less than three centuries afterwards, as the most powerful tribe in the Frankish confederacy.

EARLY FRANKISH WARRIORS

The league thus formed was subject to two strong motives, either of which might alone have been sufficient to impel a brave and active people into a career of migration and conquest. The first of these was necessity, — the actual want of the necessaries of life for their increasing population, — and the second desire, excited to the utmost by the spectacle of the wealth and civilisation of the Gallic provinces.

As long as the Romans held firm possession of Gaul, the Germans could do little to gratify their longings; they could only obtain a settlement in that country by the consent of the emperor and on certain conditions. Examples of such merely tolerated colonisation were the Tribocci, the Vangiones, and the Ubii at Colonia Agrippina (Cologne). But when the Roman Empire began to feel the numbness of approaching dissolution, and, as is usually the case, first in its extremities, the Franks were amongst the most active and successful assailants of their enfeebled foe: and if they were attracted towards the West by the abundance they beheld of all that could relieve their necessities and gratify their lust of spoil, they were also impelled in the same direction by the Saxons, the rival league, a people as brave and perhaps more barbarous than themselves. A glance at the map of Germany of that period will do much to explain to us the migration of the Franks, and that long and bloody feud between them and the Saxons, which began with the Chatti and Cherusci, and needed all the power and energy of a Charlemagne to bring to a successful close. The Saxons formed behind the Franks, and could only reach the provinces of Gaul by sea. It was natural therefore that they should look with the inteusest hatred upon a people who barred their progress to a more genial climate and excluded them from their share in the spoils of the Roman world.

The Franks advanced upon Gaul from two different directions, and under the different names of Salians and Ripuarians, the former of whom we have reason to connect more particularly with the Sugambrian tribe. The

origin of the words Salian and Ripuarian, which are first used respectively by Ammianus Marcellinus[h] and Jordanes,[i] is very obscure, and has served to exercise the ingenuity of ethnographers. There are, however, no sufficient grounds for a decided opinion. At the same time it is by no means improbable that the river Yssel, Isala, or Sal (for it has borne all these appellations) may have given its name to that portion of the Franks who lived along its course. With still greater probability may the name Ripuarii or Riparii be derived from Ripa, a term used by the Romans to signify the Rhine. These dwellers on the "bank" were those that remained in their ancient settlements while their Salian kinsmen were advancing into the heart of Gaul.

### FIRST CONFLICTS WITH ROME

It would extend the introductory portion of this chapter beyond its proper limits to refer, however briefly, to all the successive efforts of the Franks to gain a permanent footing upon Roman ground. Though often defeated, they perpetually renewed the contest; and when Roman historians and panegyrists inform us that the whole nation was several times "utterly destroyed," the numbers and geographical position in which we find them a short time after every such annihilation prove to us the vanity of such accounts. Aurelian, as we have seen, defeated them at Mainz, in 242 A.D., and drove them into the swamps of Holland. They were routed again about twelve years afterwards by Gallienus; but they quickly recovered from this blow, for in 276 A.D. we find them in possession of sixty Gallic cities, of which Probus is said to have deprived them, and to have destroyed four hundred thousand of them and their allies on Roman ground. In 280 A.D., they gave their aid to the usurper Proculus, who claimed to be of Frankish blood, but was nevertheless betrayed by them; and in 288 A.D., Carausius the Menapian was sent to clear the seas of their roving barks. But the latter found it more agreeable to shut his eyes to their piracies, in return for a share of the booty, and they afterwards aided in protecting him from the chastisement due to his treachery, and in investing him with the imperial purple in Britain.

In the reign of Maximian, we find a Frankish army, probably of Ripuarians, at Trèves, where they were defeated by that emperor; and both he and Diocletian adopted the title of "Francicus," which many succeeding emperors were proud to bear. The first appearance of the Salian Franks with whom we are chiefly concerned is in the occupation of the Batavian Islands, in the lower Rhine. They were attacked in that territory in 292 A.D., by Constantius Chlorus, who, as is said, not only drove them out of Batavia, but marched, triumphant and unopposed, through their own country as far as the Danube. The latter part of this story has little foundation either in history or probability.

The most determined and successful resistance to their progress was made by Constantine the Great, in the first part of the fourth century. We must, however, receive the extravagant accounts of the imperial annalists with considerable caution. It is evident, even from their own language, that the great emperor effected more by stratagem than by force. He found the Salians once more in Batavia, and, after defeating them in a great battle, carried off a large number of captives to Augusta Trevirorum (Trèves), the residence of the emperor, and a rival of Rome itself in the splendour of its public buildings.

It was in the circus of this city, and in the presence of Constantine, that the notorious "Ludi Francici" was celebrated; at which several thousand Franks, including their kings Regaisus and Ascaricus, were compelled to fight with wild beasts, to the inexpressible delight of the Christian spectators. "Those of the Frankish prisoners," says Eumenius,[g] "whose perfidy unfitted them for military service, and their ferocity for servitude, were given to the wild beasts as a show, and wearied the raging monsters by their multitude." "This magnificent spectacle," Nazarius[g] praises, some twenty years after it had taken place, in the most enthusiastic terms, comparing Constantine to a youthful Hercules who had strangled two serpents in the cradle of his empire. Eumenius calls it a "daily and eternal victory," and says that Constantine had erected terror as a bulwark against his barbarian enemies. This terror did not, however, prevent the Franks from taking up arms to revenge their butchered countrymen, nor the Alamanni from joining in the insurrection. The skill and fortune of Constantine generally prevailed; he destroyed great numbers of the Franks and the *innumeræ gentes* who fought on their side, and really appears for a time to have checked their progress.

It is impossible to read the brief yet confused account of these incessant encounters between the Romans and barbarians, without coming to the conclusion that only half the truth is told; that while every advantage gained by the former is greatly exaggerated, the successes of the latter are passed over in silence. The most glorious victory of a Roman general procures him only a few months' repose, and the destruction of "hundreds of thousands" of Franks and Alamanni seems but to increase their numbers. We may fairly say of the Franks, what Julian[j] and Eutropius[k] have said respecting the Goths, that they were not so utterly annihilated as the Panegyrists[g] pretend, and that many of the victories gained over them cost "more money than blood."

The death of Constantine was the signal for a fresh advance on the part of the Franks. Libanius,[l] the Greek rhetorician, when extolling the deeds of Constans, the youngest son of Constantine the Great, says that the emperor stemmed the impetuous torrent of barbarians "by a love of war even greater than their own." He also says that they received overseers; but this was no doubt on Roman ground, which would account for their submission, as we know that the Franks were more solicitous about real than nominal possession. During the frequent struggles for the purple which took place at this period, the aid of the Franks was sought for by the different pretenders, and rewarded, in case of success, by large grants of land within the limits of the empire. The barbarians consented, in fact, to receive as a gift what had really been won by their own valour, and could not have been withheld. Even previous to the reign of Constantine, some Frankish generals had risen to high posts in the service of Roman emperors. Magnentius, himself a German, endeavoured to support his usurpation by Frankish and Saxon missionaries; and Silvanus, who was driven into rebellion by the ingratitude of Constantius, whom he had faithfully served, was a Frank.

The state of confusion into which the empire was thrown by the turbulence and insolence of the Roman armies, and the selfish ambition of their leaders, was highly favourable to the progress of the Franks in Gaul. Their next great and general movement took place in 355 A.D., when, along the whole Roman frontier from Strasburg to the sea, they began to cross the Rhine, and to throw themselves in vast numbers upon the Gallic provinces,

with the full determination of forming permanent settlements. But again the relenting fates of Rome raised up a hero in the person of the emperor Julian, worthy to have lived in the most glorious period of her history. After one or two unsuccessful efforts, Julian succeeded in retaking Colonia Agrippina (Cologne) and other places which the Germans, true to their traditionary hatred of walled towns, had laid bare of all defences.

### FRANKS IN THE ROMAN ARMY

In the last general advance of the Franks in 355 A.D., the Salians had not only once more recovered Batavia, but had spread into Toxandria, in which they firmly fixed themselves. It is important to mark the date of this event, because it was at this time that the Salians made their first permanent settlement on the left bank of the Rhine, and by the acquisition of Toxandria laid the foundation of the kingdom of Clovis. Julian indeed attacked them there in 358 A.D., but he had probably good reasons for not reducing them to despair, as we find that they were permitted to retain their newly acquired lands, on condition of acknowledging themselves subjects of the empire. He was better pleased to have them as soldiers than as enemies, and they, having felt the weight of his arm, were by no means averse to serve in his ranks, and to enrich themselves by the plunder of the East. Once in undisputed possession of Toxandria, they gradually spread themselves further and further, until, at the beginning of the fifth century, we find them occupying the left bank of the Rhine. The Ripuarians, meanwhile, were extending themselves from Andernach downwards along the middle Rhine, and gained possession of Cologne about the time of the conquest of Tornacum by their Salian brethren.

We shall be the less surprised that some of the fairest portions of the Roman Empire should thus fall an almost unresisting prey to barbarian invaders, when we remember that the defence of the empire itself was sometimes committed to the hands of Frankish soldiers. Those of the Franks who were already settled in Gaul were often engaged in endeavouring to drive back the ever increasing multitude of fresh barbarians, who hurried across the Rhine to share in the bettered fortunes of their kinsmen, or even to plunder them of their newly acquired riches. Thus Mallobaudes, who is called king of the Franks, and held the office of *domesticorum comes* under Gratian, commanded in the imperial army which defeated the Alamanni at Argentaria. And again, in the short reign of Maximus, who assumed the purple in Gaul, Spain, and Britain, near the end of the fourth century, we are told that three Frankish kings, Genobaudes, Marcomeres, and Sunno, crossed the lower Rhine, and plundered the country along the river as far as Cologne; although the whole of northern Gaul was already in possession of their countrymen.

The generals Nonnius and Quintinus, whom Maximus had left behind him at Augusta Trevirorum, the seat of the imperial government in Gaul, hastened to Colonia Agrippina, from which the marauding Franks had already retired with their booty. Quintinus crossed the Rhine in pursuit at Neus, and, unmindful of the fate of Varus in the Teutoburg forest, followed the retreating enemy into the morasses. The Franks, once more upon friendly and familiar ground, turned upon their pursuers, and are said to have destroyed nearly the whole Roman army with poisoned arrows. The war continued, and was only brought to a successful conclusion for the Romans by

[388-425 A.D.]

the courage and conduct of Arbogastes, a Frank in the service of Theodosius. Unable to make peace with his barbarous countrymen, and sometimes defeated by them, this general crossed the Rhine when the woods were leafless, ravaged the country of the Chamavi, Bructeri, and Chatti, and having slain two of their chiefs named Priam and Genobaudes, compelled Marcomeres and Sunno to give hostages. The submission of the Franks must have been of short continuance, for we read that in 398 A.D. these same kings, Marcomeres and Sunno, were again found ravaging the left bank of the Rhine by Stilicho. This famous warrior defeated them in a great battle, and sent the former, or perhaps both of them, in chains to Italy, where Marcomeres died in prison.

The first few years of the fifth century are occupied in the struggle between Alaric the Goth and Stilicho, which ended in the sacking of Rome by the former in the year 410 A.D., the same in which he died.

While the Goths were inflicting deadly wounds on the very heart of the empire, the distant provinces of Germany and Gaul presented a scene of indescribable confusion. Innumerable hosts of Astingians, Vandals, Alani, Suevi, and Burgundiones threw themselves like robbers upon the prostrate body of imperial Rome, and scrambled for the gems which fell from her costly diadem. In such a storm the Franks could no longer sustain the part of champions of the empire, but doubtless had enough to do to defend themselves and hold their own. We can only guess at the fortune which befell the nations in that dark period, from the state in which we find them when the glimmering light of history once more dawns upon the chaos.

## EARLY KINGS AND THE SALIC LAWS

Of the internal state of the Frankish league in these times, we learn from ancient authorities absolutely nothing on which we can safely depend. The blank is filled up by popular fable. It is in this period, about 417 A.D., that the reign of Pharamond is placed, of whom we may more than doubt whether he ever existed at all. To this hero were afterwards ascribed not only the permanent conquests made at this juncture by the various tribes of Franks, but the establishment of the monarchy and the collection and publication of the well-known Salic laws. The sole foundation for this harmonious fabric is a passage interpolated into an ancient chronicle (Prosper[m]) of the fifth century; and, with this single exception, Pharamond's name is never mentioned before the seventh century. The whole story is perfected and rounded off by the author of the *Gesta Francorum*,[n] according to whom Pharamond was the son of Marcomeres, the prince who ended his days in the Italian prison. The fact that nothing is known of him by Gregory of Tours[o] or Fredegarius[p] is sufficient to prevent our regarding him as an historical personage. To this may be added that he is not mentioned in the prologue of the Salic law, with which his name has been so intimately associated by later writers.

Though well authenticated names of persons and places fail us at this time, it is not difficult to conjecture what must have been the main facts of the case. Great changes took place among the Franks in the first half of the fifth century, which did much to prepare them for their subsequent career. The greater portion of them had been mere marauders, like their German brethren of other nations: they now began to assume the character of settlers; and as the idea of founding an extensive empire was still far

from their thoughts, they occupied in preference the lands which lay nearest to their ancient homes. There are many incidental reasons which make this change in their mode of life a natural and inevitable one. The country whose surface had once afforded a rich and easily collected booty, and well repaid the hasty foray of weeks, and even days, had been stripped of its movable wealth by repeated incursions of barbarians still fiercer than themselves. All that was above the surface the Alan and the Vandal had swept away, the treasures which remained had to be sought for with the plough. The Franks were compelled to turn their attention to that agriculture which their indolent and warlike fathers had hated; which required fixed settlements, and all the laws of property and person indissolubly connected therewith. Again, though there is no sufficient reason to connect the Salic laws with the mythical name of Pharamond, or to suppose that they were altogether the work of this age (since we know from Tacitus[b] that the Germans had similar laws in their ancient forests), it is very probable that this celebrated code now received the form in which it has come down to us.

A Frankish Officer

This view of the case is strongly supported by internal evidence in the laws themselves, which, according to the *Prologue*, were written while the Franks were still heathens, and are peculiarly suited to the simple wants of a barbarous people. Even the fiction of the foundation of the Frankish monarchy by Pharamond may indicate some real and important change in the structure of the state.

That there was at that time but a single king "in Francia" is of course untrue; but nevertheless it seems highly probable, when taken in connection with the subsequent history, that the princes who reigned over the different Frankish tribes established in Gaul belonged, at this period, to one family. And this is the truth which appears to lie at the foundation of the story of this mythical personage.

The next important and well-established historical fact which we meet with in this dreary waste of doubt and conjecture, is the conquest of Cameracum (Cambray) by Clodion, in 429 A.D. This acquisition forms the third stage in the progress of the Salian Franks towards the complete possession of Gaul.

The foremost among the kindred chiefs of the different Frankish tribes at this period was Clodion, whom some modern historians, and among them Gibbon,[d] have represented, on the slenderest foundation, as the father of Merovæus, and first of the race of long-haired kings. Gregory of Tours[e] gives no countenance to the statement thus boldly made; he does not know

that Merovæus was the son of Clodion, nor has he anything to say about Merovæus himself. That the power of Clodion was considerable is evinced by the magnitude of his undertakings. The growing numbers of the Franks in Gaul, continually increased by fresh swarms of settlers from their ancient seats, made an extension of their territory not merely desirable, but even necessary to their existence. Clodion therefore boldly undertook the conquest of the Belgica Secunda, a part of which was still in possession of the Romans. Having sent forward spies to Cameracum, and learned from them that it was insufficiently defended, he advanced upon that city, and succeeded in taking it. After spending a few days within the walls of his new acquisition, he marched as far as the river Samara (Somme). His progress was checked by Aëtius and Majorian, who surprised him in the neighbourhood of Arras, at a place called Helena (Lens), while celebrating a marriage, and forced him to retire. Yet at the end of the war, the Franks remained in full possession of the country which Clodion had overrun; and the Samara became the boundary of the Salian land upon the southwest, as it continued to be until the time of Clovis.

Clodion died in 447 A.D., and was thus saved from the equally pernicious alliance or enmity of the ruthless conqueror Attila. This "Scourge of God," as he delighted to be called, appeared in Gaul about the year 450 A.D. at the head of an innumerable host of mounted Huns; a race so singular in their aspect and habits as to seem scarcely human, and compared with whom the wildest Franks and Goths must have appeared rational and civilised beings.

The time of Attila's descent upon the Rhine was well chosen for the prosecution of his scheme of universal dominion. Between the fragment of the Roman Empire, governed by Aëtius, and the Franks under the successors of Clodion, there was either open war or a hollow truce. The succession to the chief power in the Salian tribe was the subject of a violent dispute between two Frankish princes, the elder of whom is supposed by some to have been called Merovæus.

We have seen that there is some reason to doubt the existence of a prince of this name; and there is no evidence that either of the rival candidates was a son of Clodion. Whatever their parentage or name may have been, the one took part with Attila, and the other with the Roman Aëtius, on condition, no doubt, of having their respective claims allowed and supported by their allies. In the bloody and decisive battle of the Catalaunian Fields round Châlons, Franks, under the name of Leti and Ripuarii, served under the so-called Merovæus in the army of Aëtius, together with Theodoric and his Visigoths. Among the forces of Attila another body of Franks was arrayed, either by compulsion, or instigated to this unnatural course by the fierce hatred of party spirit. From the result of the battle of Châlons, we must suppose that the ally of Aëtius succeeded to the throne of Clodion (451).

The effects of the invasion of Gaul by Attila were neither great nor lasting, and his retreat left the German and Roman parties in much the same condition as he found them. The Roman Empire indeed was at an end in that province, yet the valour and wisdom of Ægidius enabled him to maintain, as an independent chief, the authority which he had faithfully exercised as master-general of Gaul, under the noble and virtuous Majorian. The extent of his territory is not clearly defined, but it must have been, in part at least, identical with that of which his son and successor, Syagrius, was deprived by Clovis. Common opinion limits this to the country

between the Oise, the Marne, and the Seine, to which some writers have added Auxerre and Troyes. The respect in which Ægidius was held by the Franks, as well as his own countrymen, enabled him to set at defiance the threats and machinations of the barbarian Ricimer, who virtually ruled at Rome, though in another's name. The strongest proof of the high opinion they entertained of the merits of Ægidius, is said to have been given by the Salians in the reign of their next king. The prince, to whom the name Merovæus has been arbitrarily assigned, was succeeded by his son Childeric, in 458 A.D. The conduct of this licentious youth was such as to disgust and alienate his subjects, who had not yet ceased to value female honour, nor adopted the loose manners of the Romans and their Gallic imitators.

The authority of the Salian kings over their fierce warriors was held by a precarious tenure. The loyalty which distinguished the Franks in later times had not yet arisen in their minds, and they did not scruple to send the corrupter of their wives and daughters into ignominious exile. Childeric took refuge with Bissinus (or Bassinus), king of the Thuringians, a people dwelling on the river Unstrut. It was then that the Franks, according to the somewhat improbable account of Gregory,[o] unanimously chose Ægidius for their king, and actually submitted to his rule for the space of eight years. At the end of that period, returning affection for their native prince, the mere love of change, or the machinations of a party, induced the Franks to recall Childeric from exile, or, at all events, to allow him to return.

Whatever may have been the cause of his restoration, it does not appear to have been the consequence of an improvement in his morals. The period of his exile had been characteristically employed in the seduction of Basina, the wife of his hospitable protector at the Thuringian court. This royal lady, whose character may perhaps do something to diminish the guilt of Childeric in our eyes, was unwilling to be left behind on the restoration of her lover to his native country. Scarcely had he re-established his authority when he was unexpectedly followed by Basina, whom he immediately married. The offspring of this questionable alliance was Clovis, who was born in the year 466 A.D. The remainder of Childeric's reign was chiefly spent in a struggle with the Visigoths, in which Franks and Romans, under their respective leaders Childeric and Ægidius, were amicably united against the common foe.

We hasten to the reign of Clovis,[1] who, during a rule of about thirty years, not only united the various tribes of Franks under one powerful dynasty, and founded a kingdom in Gaul on a broad and enduring basis, but made his throne the centre of union to by far the greater portion of the whole German race.

### THE REIGN OF CLOVIS

When Clovis succeeded his father as king of the Salians, at the early age of fifteen, the extent of his territory and the number of his subjects were, as we know, extremely small; at his death, he left to his successors a kingdom more extensive than that of modern France.

The influence of the grateful partiality discernible in the works of Catholic historians and chroniclers towards "the eldest son of the church," who secured for them the victory over heathens on the one side, and heretics on the other, prevents us from looking to them for an unbiassed estimate of his

[1 He is also called Hlodowig and Chlodwig, and succeeded his father in 481.]

character. Many of his crimes appeared to be committed in the cause of Catholicity itself, and these they could hardly see in their proper light. Pagans and Arians would have painted him in different colours; and had any of their works come down to us, we might have sought the truth between the positive of partiality and the negative of hatred. But fortunately, while the chroniclers praise his actions in the highest terms, they tell us what those actions were, and thus compel us to form a very different judgment from their own. It would not be easy to extract from the pages of his greatest admirers the slightest evidence of his possessing any qualities but those which are necessary to a conqueror. In the hands of providence he was an instrument of the greatest good to the country he subdued, inasmuch as he freed it from the curse of division into petty states, and furthered the spread of Christianity in the very heart of Europe. But of any word or action that could make us admire or love the man, there is not a single trace in history. His undeniable courage is debased by a degree of cruelty unusual even in his times; and his consummate skill and prudence, which did more to raise him to his high position than even his military qualities, are rendered odious by the forms they take of unscrupulous falsehood, meanness, cunning, and hypocrisy.

It will add to the perspicuity of our brief narrative of the conquests of Clovis, if we pause for a moment to consider the extent and situation of the different portions into which Gaul was divided at his accession.

There were in all six independent states: (1) that of the Salians; (2) that of the Ripuarians; (3) that of the Visigoths; (4) that of the Burgundiones; (5) the kingdom of Syagrius; and (6) Armorica (by which the whole sea coast between Seine and Loire was then signified). Of the first two we have already spoken. The Visigoths held the whole of southern Gaul. It is important to bear these geographical divisions in mind, because they coincide with the successive Frankish conquests made under Clovis and his sons.

It would be unphilosophical to ascribe to Clovis a preconceived plan of making himself master of these several independent states, and of not only overthrowing the sole remaining pillar of the Roman Empire in Gaul, but, what was far more difficult, of subduing other German tribes, as fierce and independent, and in some cases more numerous than his own. In what he did, he was merely gratifying a passion for the excitements of war and acquisition, and that desire of expanding itself to its utmost limits, which is natural to every active, powerful, and imperious mind. He must indeed have been more than human to foresee, through all the obstacles that lay in his path, the career he was destined by providence to run. He was not even master of the whole Salian tribe; and besides the Salians, there were other Franks on the Rhine, the Scaldis (Schelde), the Mosa, and the Mosella, in no way inferior to his own subjects, and governed by kings of the same family as himself.

Nor was Syagrius, to whom the anomalous power of his father Ægidius had descended, a despicable foe. His merits, indeed, were rather those of an able lawyer and a righteous judge than of a warrior; but he had acquired by his civil virtues a reputation which made him an object of envy to Clovis, who dreaded perhaps the permanent establishment of a Roman dynasty in Gaul. There were reasons for attacking Syagrius first, which can hardly have escaped the cunning of Clovis, and which doubtless guided him in the choice of his earliest victim. The very integrity of the noble Roman's character was one of these reasons. Had Clovis commenced the work of destruction

by attacking his kinsmen Sigebert of Cologne and Ragnachar of Cambray (Cameracum) he would not only have received no aid from Syagrius in his unrighteous aggression, but might have found him ready to oppose it. But against Syagrius it was easy for Clovis to excite the national spirit of his brother Franks, both in and out of his own territory. In such an expedition, even had the kings declined to take an active part, he might reckon on crowds of volunteers from every Frankish *gau*.

CLOVIS I
[Based on an old French print]

As soon therefore as he had emerged from the forced inactivity of extreme youth (a period in which, fortunately for him, he was left undisturbed by his less grasping and unscrupulous neighbours), he determined to bring the question of pre-eminence between the Franks and Romans to as early an issue as possible. Without waiting for a plausible ground of quarrel, he challenged Syagrius, *more Germanico*, to the field, that their respective fates might be determined by the god of battles. Ragnachar of Cambray was solicited to accompany his treacherous relative on this expedition, and agreed to do so. Chararic, another Frankish prince, whose alliance had been looked for, preferred waiting until fortune had decided, with the prudent intention of siding with the winner, and coming fresh into the field in time to spoil the vanquished.

Syagrius was at Soissons (Augusta Suessionum), which he had inherited from his father, when Clovis, with characteristic decision and rapidity, passed through the wood of Ardennes, and fell upon him with resistless force. The Roman was completely defeated, and the victor, having taken possession of Soissons, Rheims, Durocortorum, and other Roman towns in the Belgica Secunda, extended his frontier to the river Loire, the boundary of the Visigoths. This battle took place in 486 A.D.

We know little or nothing of the materials of which the Roman army was composed. If it consisted entirely of Gauls, accustomed to depend on Roman aid, and destitute of the spirit of freemen, the ease with which Syagrius was defeated will cause us less surprise. Having lost all in a single battle, the unfortunate Roman fled for refuge to Toulouse (Tolosa), the court of Alaric king of the Visigoths, who basely yielded him to the threats of the youthful conqueror. But one fate awaited those who stood in the way of Clovis: Syagrius was immediately put to death, less in anger than from the calculating policy which guided all the movements of the Salian's unfeeling heart.

[486–496 A.D.]

During the next ten years after the death of Syagrius, there is less to relate of Clovis than might be expected from the commencement of his career. We cannot suppose that such a spirit was really at rest: he was probably nursing his strength and watching his opportunities; for, with all his impetuosity, he was not a man to engage in an undertaking without good assurance of success. In the year 496 A.D. the Salians began that career of conquest, which they followed up with scarcely any intermission until the death of their warrior king.

The Alamanni, extending themselves from their original seats on the right bank of the Rhine, between the Main and the Danube, had pushed forward into Germanica Prima, where they came into collision with the Frankish subjects of King Sigebert of Cologne. Clovis flew to the assistance of his kinsman, and defeated the Alamanni in a great battle in the neighbourhood of Zülpich. He then established a considerable number of his Franks in the territory of the Alamanni, the traces of whose residences are found in the names of Franconia and Frankfort.

### CLOVIS TURNS CHRISTIAN (496 A.D.)

The same year is rendered remarkable in ecclesiastical history by the conversion of Clovis to Christianity. In 493 A.D., he had married Clotilda,[1] Chilperic the king of Burgundy's daughter, who, being herself a Christian, was naturally anxious to turn away her warlike spouse from the rude faith of his forefathers. The real result of her endeavours it is impossible to estimate, but, at all events, she has not received from history the credit of success. The mere suggestions of an affectionate wife would be considered as too simple and prosaic a means of accounting for a change involving such mighty consequences. The conversion of Clovis was so vitally important to the interests of the Catholic church, that the chroniclers of that wonder-loving age, profuse in the employment of extraordinary means for the smallest ends, could never be brought to believe that this great event was the result of anything but a miracle of the most public and striking character.

The way in which the convictions of Clovis were changed is unknown to us, but there were natural agencies at work, and his conversion is not, under the circumstances, a thing to excite surprise. According to the common belief, however, in the Roman church, it was in the battle of Zülpich[2] that the heart of Clovis, callous to the pious solicitude of his wife, and the powerful and alluring influence of the Catholic ritual, was touched by a special interposition of providence in his behalf. When the fortune of the battle seemed turning against him, he thought of the God whom his wife adored, of whose power and majesty he had heard so much, and vowed that if he escaped the present danger, and came off victorious, he would suffer himself to be baptised, and become the champion of the Christian faith. Like another Constantine, he saw written on the face of heaven that his prayer was heard; he conquered, and fulfilled his promise at Christmas in the same year, when he was baptised by Remigius at Rheims, with three thousand of his followers.

The sincerity of Clovis' conversion has been called in question for many reasons — such as the unsuitability of his subsequent life to Christian principles; but chiefly on the ground of the many political advantages to be

[1 Also spelled Hlothehild and Clothildis.]

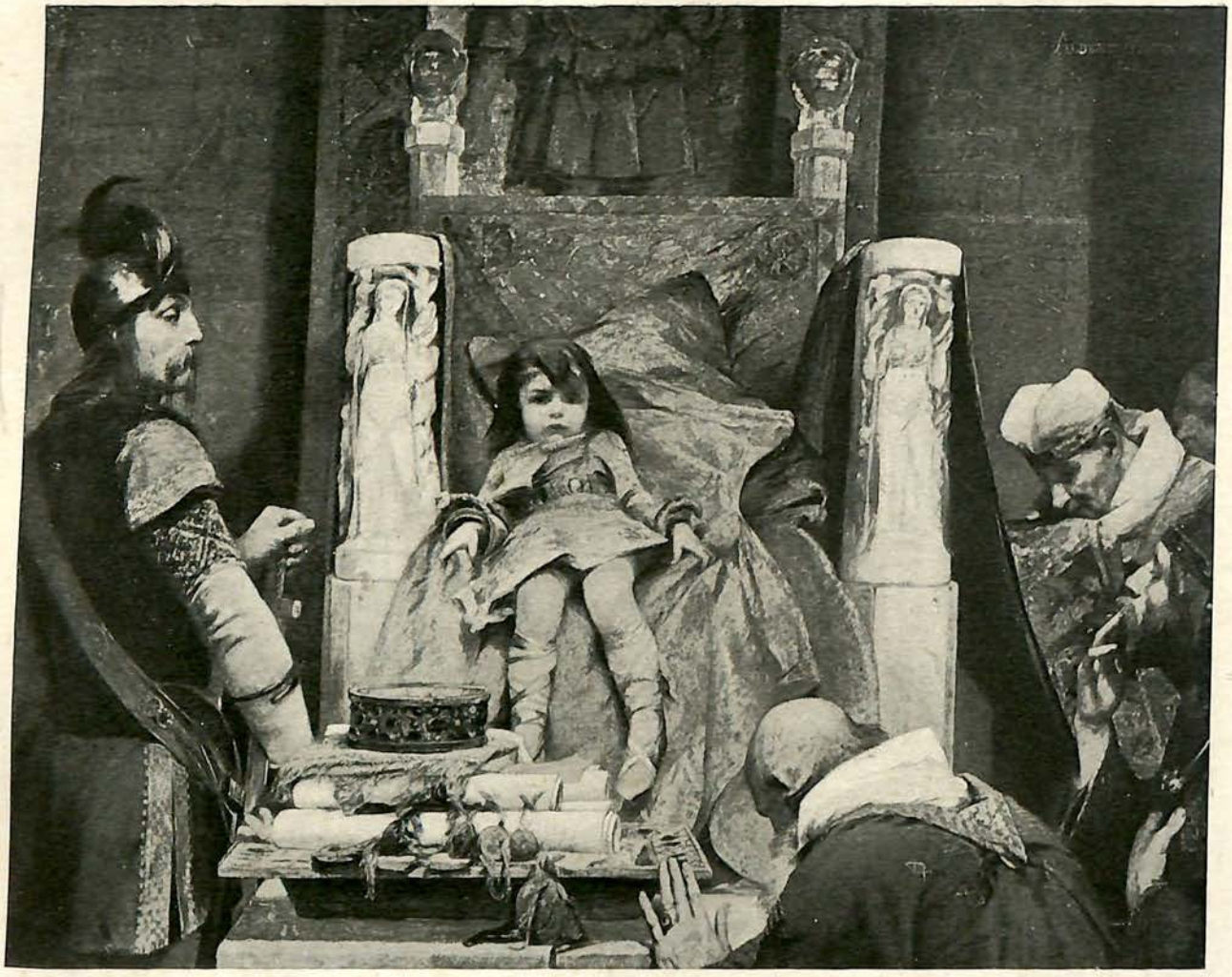
[2 Clovis defeated the Alamanni in 496, but not, as is wrongly stated, at Tolbiacum or Zülpich.]

derived from a public profession of the Catholic faith. We are too ready with such explanations of the actions of distinguished characters, too apt to forget that politicians are also men, and to overlook the very powerful influences which lie nearer to their hearts than even political calculation. A spirit was abroad in the world, drawing men away from the graves of a dead faith to the life and light of the Gospel — a spirit which not even the coldest and sternest heart could altogether resist. There was something, too, peculiarly imposing in the attitude of the Christian church at that period. All else in the Roman world seemed dying of mere weakness and old age; the Christian church was still in the vigour of youth, and its professors were animated by indomitable perseverance and boundless zeal. All else fell down in terror before the barbarian conqueror; the fabric of the church seemed indestructible, and its ministers stood erect in his presence, as if depending for strength and aid upon a power, which was the more terrible because indefinite in its nature and uncertain in its mode of operation.

And Clovis was as likely to be worked upon by such means as the meanest of his followers. We must not suppose that the discrepancy between his Christian profession and his public and private actions, which we discern so clearly, was equally evident to himself. How should it be so? His own conscience was not specially enlightened beyond the measure of his age. The bravest warriors of his nation hailed him as a patriot and hero, and the ministers of God assured him that his victories were won in the service of truth and heaven. It is always dangerous to judge of the sincerity of men's religious — perhaps we should say theological — convictions by the tenor of their moral conduct, and this even in our own age and nation; but far more so in respect to men of other times and countries, at a different stage of civilisation and religious development, at which the scale of morality was not only lower, but differently graduated from our own.

The conscience of a Clovis remained undisturbed in the midst of deeds whose enormity makes us shudder; and, on the other hand, how trivial in our eyes are some of those offences which loaded him with the heaviest sense of guilt! The eternal laws of the God of justice and mercy might be broken with impunity; and means which we should call the basest treachery and the most odious cruelty were employed to compass the destruction of an heretical or pagan enemy; but woe to him who offended St. Martin, or laid a finger on the property of the meanest of his servants! When Clovis was seeking to gratify his lust of power, he believed, no doubt, that he was at the same time fighting under the banner of Christ, and destroying the enemies of God. And no wonder, for many a priest and bishop thought the same, and told him what they thought.

We are, however, far from affirming that the political advantages to be gained from an open avowal of the Catholic faith at this juncture escaped the notice of so astute a mind as that of Clovis. No one was more sensible of those advantages than he. The immediate consequences were indeed apparently disastrous. He was himself fearful of the effect which his change of religion might have upon his Franks, and we are told that many of them left him and joined his kinsman Ragnaric. But the ill effects, though immediate, were slight and transient, while the good results went on accumulating from year to year. In the first place, his baptism into the Catholic church conciliated for him the zealous affection of his Gallo-Roman subjects, whose number and wealth, and above all whose superior knowledge and intelligence rendered their aid of the utmost value. With respect to his own

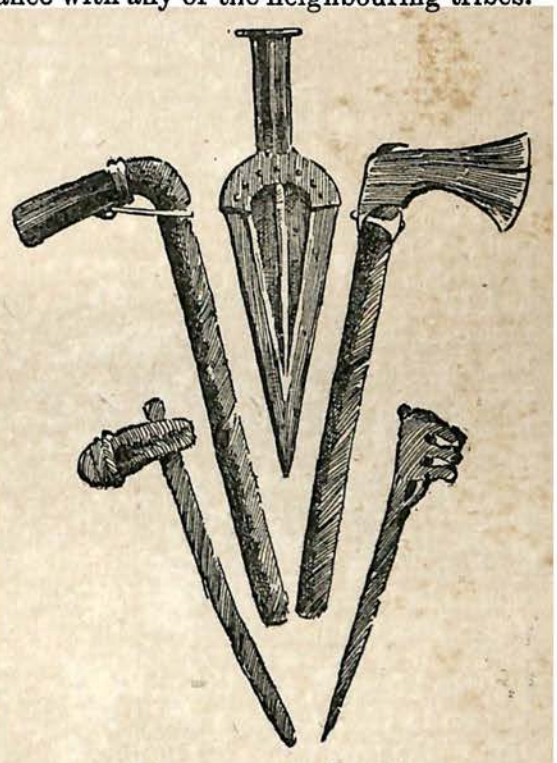


HOMAGE TO CLOVIS II

(From the painting by Maignan)

Franks, we are justified in supposing that, removed as they were from the sacred localities with which their faith was intimately connected, they either viewed the change with indifference, or, wavering between old associations and present influences, needed only the example of the king to decide their choice, and induce them to enlist under the banner of the cross.

The German neighbours of Clovis had either preserved their ancient faith or adopted the Arian heresy. His conversion therefore was advantageous or disadvantageous to him, as regarded them, according to the objects he had in view. Had he really desired to live with his compatriot kings on terms of equality and friendship, his reception into a hostile church would certainly not have furthered his views. But nothing was more foreign to his thoughts than friendship and alliance with any of the neighbouring tribes. His desire was to reduce them all to a state of subjection to himself. He had the genuine spirit of the conqueror, which cannot brook the sight of independence; and his keen intellect and unflinching boldness enabled him to see his advantages and to turn them to the best account.



WEAPONS OF THE FRANKS

[These were used for throwing and for scalping after the manner of the American Indians.]

Even in those countries in which heathenism or Arian Christianity prevailed, there was generally a zealous and united community of Catholic Christians (including all the Romance inhabitants), who, being outnumbered and sometimes persecuted, were inclined to look for aid abroad. Clovis became by his conversion the object of hope and attachment to such a party in almost every country on the continent of Europe. He had the powerful support of the whole body of the Catholic clergy, in whose hearts the interests of their church far outweighed all other considerations. In other times and lands (in our own for instance) the spirit of loyalty and the love of country have often sufficed to counteract the influence of theological opinions, and have made men patriots in the hour of trial, when their spiritual allegiance to an alien head tempted them to be traitors. But what patriotism could Gallo-Romans feel, who for ages had been the slaves of slaves, or what loyalty to barbarian oppressors, whom they despised as well as feared?

The happy effects of Clovis' conversion were not long in showing themselves. In the very next year after that event (497 A.D.) the Armoricans, inhabiting the country between the Seine and Loire, who had stoutly defended themselves against the heathen Franks, submitted with the utmost readiness to the royal convert, whom bishops delighted to honour; and in almost every succeeding struggle the advantages he derived from the strenuous support of the Catholic party became more and more clearly evident.

In 500 A.D. Clovis reduced the Burgundiones to a state of semi-dependence, after a fierce and bloody battle with Gundobald, their king, at Dijon on the Ouche. In this conflict, as in almost every other, Clovis attained his ends in a great measure by turning to account the dissensions of his enemies. Gundobald had called upon his brother Godegisil, who ruled over one division of their tribe, to aid him in repelling the attack of the Franks. The call was answered, in appearance at least; but in the decisive struggle Godegisil, according to a secret understanding, deserted with all his forces to the enemy. Gundobald was of course defeated, and submitted to conditions which, however galling to his pride and patriotism, could not have been very severe, since we find him immediately afterwards punishing the treachery of his brother, whom he besieged in the city of Vienne (the Roman Vienna), and put to death in an Arian church.

The circumstances of the times, rather than the moderation of Clovis, prevented him from calling Gundobald to account. A far more arduous struggle was at hand, which needed all the wily Salian's resources of power and policy to bring to a successful issue — the struggle with the powerful king and people of the Visigoths, whose immediate neighbour he had become after the voluntary submission of the Armoricans in 497 A.D. The valour and conduct of their renowned king Euric had put the western Goths in full possession of all that portion of Gaul which lay between the rivers Loire and Rhone, together with nearly the whole of Spain. That distinguished monarch had lately been succeeded by his son Alaric II, who was now in the flower of youth. It was in the war with this ill-starred prince — the most difficult and doubtful in which he had been engaged — that Clovis experienced the full advantages of his recent change of faith. King Euric, who was an Arian, wise and great as he appears to have been in many respects, had alienated the affections of multitudes of his people by persecuting the Catholic minority; and though the same charge does not appear to lie against Alaric, it is evident that the hearts of his orthodox subjects beat with no true allegiance towards their heretical king. The baptism of Clovis had turned their eyes towards him, as one who would not only free them from the persecution of their theological enemies, but procure for them and their church a speedy victory and a secure predominance. The hopes they had formed, and the aid they were ready to afford him, were not unknown to Clovis, whose eager rapacity was only checked by the consideration of the part which his brother-in-law Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, was likely to take in the matter.

This great and enlightened Goth, whose refined magnificence renders the contemptuous sense in which we use the term Gothic more than usually inappropriate, was ever ready to mediate between kindred tribes of Germans, whom on every suitable occasion he exhorted to live in unity, mindful of their common origin. He is said on this occasion to have brought about a meeting between Clovis and Alaric on a small island in the Loire in the neighbourhood of Amboise. The story is very doubtful, to say the least. Had he done so much, he would probably have done more, and have shielded his youthful kinsman with his strong right arm. Whatever he did was done in vain. The Frankish conqueror knew his own advantages and determined to use them to the utmost. He received the aid not only of his kinsman Sigebert of Cologne, who sent an army to his support under Chararic, but of the king of the Burgundians (Burgundiones), who was also a Catholic. With an army thus united by a common faith, inspired by religious zeal, and no less so by the Frankish love of booty, Clovis marched to almost

[507 A.D.]

certain victory over an inexperienced leader and a kingdom divided against itself.

It is evident, from the language of Gregory of Tours,[o] that this conflict between the Franks and Visigoths was regarded by the orthodox party of his own and preceding ages as a religious war, on which, humanly speaking, the prevalence of the Catholic or the Arian creed in western Europe depended. Clovis did everything in his power to deepen this impression. He could not, he said, endure the thought that "those Arians" held a part of his beautiful Gaul. As he passed through the territory of Tours, which was supposed to be under the peculiar protection of St. Martin, he was careful to preserve the strictest discipline among his soldiers, that he might further conciliate the church and sanctify his undertaking. On his arrival at the city of Tours, he publicly displayed his reverence for the patron saint, and received the thanks and good wishes of a whole chorus of priests assembled in St. Martin's church. He was guided (according to one of the legends by which his progress has been so profusely adorned) through the swollen waters of the river Vienne by "a hind of wonderful magnitude"; and, as he approached the city of Poitiers, a pillar of fire (whose origin we may trace, as suits our views, to the favour of heaven or the treachery of man) shone forth from the cathedral, to give him the assurance of success, and to throw light upon his nocturnal march. The Catholic bishops in the kingdom of Alaric were universally favourable to the cause of Clovis, and several of them, who had not the patience to postpone the manifestation of their sympathies, were expelled by Alaric from their sees. The majority indeed made a virtue of necessity, and prayed continually and loudly, if not sincerely, for their lawful monarch. Perhaps they had even in that age learned to appreciate the efficacy of mental reservation.

Conscious of his own weakness, Alaric retired before his terrible and implacable foe, in the vain hope of receiving assistance from the Ostrogoths. He halted at last in the plains of Voulon, behind Poitiers, but even then rather in compliance with the wishes of his soldiers than from his own deliberate judgment. His soldiers, drawn from a generation as yet unacquainted with war and full of that overweening confidence which results from inexperience, were eager to meet the enemy. Treachery also was at work to prevent him from adopting the only means of safety, which lay in deferring as long as possible the too unequal contest. The Franks came on with their usual impetuosity, and with a well-founded confidence in their own prowess; and the issue of the battle was in accordance with the auspices on either side. Clovis, no less strenuous in actual fight than wise and cunning in council, exposed himself to every danger, and fought hand to hand with Alaric himself. Yet the latter was not slain in the field, but in the disorderly flight into which the Goths were quickly driven. The victorious Franks pursued them as far as Bordeaux (Burdigala), where Clovis passed the winter, while Thierry, his son, was overrunning Auvergne, Quincy, and Rouergue. The Goths, whose new king was a minor, made no further resistance; and in the following year the Salian chief took possession of the royal treasure at Toulouse. He also took the town of Angoulême, at the capture of which he was doubly rewarded for his services to the church; for not only did the inhabitants of that place rise in his favour against the Visigothic garrison, but the very walls, like those of Jericho, fell down at his approach!

A short time after these events, Clovis received the titles and dignity of Roman patricius and consul from the Greek emperor Anastasius; who

appears to have been prompted to this act more by motives of jealousy and hatred towards Theodoric the Ostrogoth, than by any love he bore the restless and encroaching Frank. The meaning of these obsolete titles, as applied to those who stood in no direct relation to either division of the Roman Empire, has never been sufficiently explained. We are at first surprised that successful warriors and powerful kings, like Clovis, Pepin, and Charlemagne himself, should condescend to accept such empty honours at the hands of the miserable eunuch-ridden monarchs of the East. That the Byzantine emperors should affect a superiority over contemporary sovereigns is intelligible enough; the weakest idiot among them, who lived at the mercy of his women and his slaves, had never resigned one tittle of his pretensions to that universal empire which an Augustus and a Trajan once possessed. But whence the acquiescence of Clovis and his great successors in this arrogant assumption? We may best account for it by remarking how long the prestige of power survives the strength that gave it. The sun of Rome was set, but the twilight of her greatness still rested on the world. The German kings and warriors received with pleasure, and wore with pride, a title which brought them into connection with that imperial city, of whose universal dominion, of whose skill in arms and arts, the traces lay everywhere around them.

A Frankish Officer

Nor was it without some solid advantages in the circumstances in which Clovis was placed. He ruled over a vast population, which had not long ceased to be subjects of the empire, and still rejoiced in the Roman name. He fully appreciated their intellectual superiority, and had already experienced the value of their assistance. Whatever tended to increase his personal dignity in their eyes (and no doubt the solemn proclamation of his Roman titles had this tendency) he deemed of no small importance.

In the same year that he was invested with the diadem and purple robe in the church of St. Martin at Tours, the encroaching Franks had the southern and eastern limits of their kingdom marked out for them by the powerful hand of Theodoric the Great. The brave but peace-loving Goth had trusted too much to his influence with Clovis, and had hoped to the last to save the unhappy Alaric, by warning and mediation. The slaughter of the Visigoths, the death of Alaric himself, the fall of Angoulême and Toulouse, the advance of the Franks upon the Rhone, where they were now besieging Arles (Arelate), had effectually undeceived him. He now prepared to bring forward the only arguments to which the ear of a Clovis is ever open—the battle-cry of a superior army. His faithful Ostrogoths were summoned to meet in the month of June, 508 A.D., and he placed a powerful army under the command of Eva (Ibba or Hebba), who led his forces into Gaul over the southern Alps. The Franks and Burgundians, who were investing Arles and Carcassonne, raised the siege and retired, but whether without or in consequence

of a battle is rendered doubtful by the conflicting testimony of the annalists. The subsequent territorial position of the combatants, however, favours the account given by Julianj that a battle did take place, in which Clovis and his allies received a most decided and bloody defeat.

The check thus given to the extension of his kingdom at the expense of other German nations, and the desire perhaps of collecting fresh strength for a more successful struggle thereafter, seem to have induced Clovis to turn his attention to the destruction of his Merovingian kindred. The manner in which he effected his purpose is related with a fulness which naturally excites suspicion. But though it is easy to detect both absurdity and inconsistency in many of the romantic details with which Gregory has furnished us, we see no reason to deny to his statements a foundation of historical truth.

Clovis was still but one of several Frankish kings; and of these Sigebert of Cologne, king of the Ripuarians, was little inferior to him in the extent of his dominions and the number of his subjects. But in other respects—in mental activity and bodily prowess—"the lame" Sigebert was no match for his Salian brother. The other Frankish rulers were Chararic, of whom mention has been made in connection with Syagrius, and Ragnachar (or Ragnachas), who held his court at Cambray. The kingdom of Sigebert extended along both banks of the Rhine, from Mogontiacum (Mainz) down to Cologne; to the west along the Moselle as far as Treves; and on the east to the river Fulda and the borders of Thuringia. The Franks who occupied this country are supposed to have taken possession of it in the reign of Valentinian III, when Mainz, Cologne, and Treves were conquered by a host of Ripuarians. Sigebert, as we have seen, had come to the aid of Clovis, in two very important battles with the Alamanni and the Visigoths, and had shown himself a ready and faithful friend whenever his co-operation was required. But gratitude was not included among the graces of the champion of catholicity, who only waited for a suitable opportunity to deprive his ally of throne and life. The present juncture was favourable to his wishes, and enabled him to rid himself of his benefactor in a manner peculiarly suited to his taste. An attempt to conquer the kingdom of Cologne by force of arms would have been but feebly seconded by his own subjects, and would have met with a stout resistance from the Ripuarians, who were conscious of no inferiority to the Salian tribe. His efforts were therefore directed to the destruction of the royal house, the downfall of which was hastened by internal divisions.

Clotaire (or Clotaric), the expectant heir of Sigebert, weary of hope deferred, gave a ready ear to the hellish suggestions of Clovis, who urged him, by the strongest appeals to his ambition and cupidity, to the murder of his father. Sigebert was slain by his own son in the Buchonian forest near Fulda. The wretched parricide endeavoured to secure the further connivance of his tempter, by offering him a share of the blood-stained treasure he had acquired. But Clovis, whose part in the transaction was probably unknown, affected a feeling of horror at the unnatural crime, and procured the immediate assassination of Clotaire — an act which rid him of a rival, silenced an embarrassing accomplice, and tended rather to raise than to lower him in the opinion of the Ripuarians. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Clovis proposed himself as the successor of Sigebert, and promised the full recognition of all existing rights, his offer should be joyfully accepted. In 509 A.D. he was elected king by the Ripuarians, and raised upon a shield in the city of Cologne, according to the Frankish custom, amid general acclamation.

"And thus," says Gregory of Tours,[o] in the same chapter in which he relates the twofold murder of his kindred, "God daily prostrated his enemies before him and increased his kingdom, because he walked before him with an upright heart, and did what was pleasing in his eyes!"—so completely did his services to the Catholic church conceal his moral deformities from the eyes of even the best of the ecclesiastical historians.

To the destruction of his next victim, Chararic, whose power was far less formidable than that of Sigebert, he was impelled by vengeance as well as ambition. That cautious prince, instead of joining the other Franks in their attack upon Syagrius, had stood aloof and waited upon fortune. Yet we can hardly attribute the conduct of Clovis towards him chiefly to revenge, for his most faithful ally had been his earliest victim; and friend and foe were alike to him, if they did but cross the path of his ambition. After getting possession of Chararic and his son, by tampering with their followers, Clovis compelled them to cut off their royal locks and become priests; subsequently, however, he caused them to be put to death.

Ragnachar of Cambray, whose kingdom lay to the north of the Somme, and extended through Flanders and Artois, might have proved a more formidable antagonist, had he not become unpopular among his own subjects by the disgusting licentiousness of his manners. The account which Gregory gives of the manner in which his ruin was effected is more curious than credible, and adds the charge of swindling to the black list of crimes recorded against the man who "walked before God with an upright heart." According to the historian, Clovis bribed the followers of Ragnachar with armour of gilded iron, which they mistook, as he intended they should, for gold. Having thus crippled by treachery the strength of his enemy, Clovis led an army over the Somme, for the purpose of attacking him in his own territory. Ragnachar prepared to meet him, but was betrayed by his own soldiers and delivered into the hands of the invader. Clovis, with facetious cruelty, reproached the fallen monarch for having disgraced their common family by suffering himself to be bound, and then split his skull with an axe. The same absurd charge was brought against Richar, the brother of Ragnachar, and the same punishment inflicted on him. A third brother was put to death at Mans.

Gregory refers, though not by name, to other kings of the same family, who were all destroyed by Clovis. "Having killed many other kings," he says, "who were his kinsmen, because he feared they might deprive him of his power, he extended his kingdom through the whole of Gaul." He also tells us that the royal hypocrite, having summoned a general assembly, complained before it, with tears in his eyes, that he was "alone in the world." "Alas, for me!" he said, "I am left as an alien among strangers, and have no relatives who can assist me." This he did, according to Gregory, "not from any real love of his kindred, or from remorse at the thought of his crimes, but that he might find out any more relatives and put them also to death."

Clovis died at Paris, in 511 A.D., in the forty-fifth year of his age and the thirtieth of his active, blood-stained, and eventful reign. He lived therefore only five years after the decisive battle of Voulon.

Did we not know, from the judgment he passes on other characters in his history, that Gregory of Tours was capable of appreciating the nobler and gentler qualities of human nature, we might easily imagine as we read what he says of Clovis that, Christian bishop as he was, he had an altogether different standard of right and wrong from ourselves. Not a single virtuous or generous action has the panegyrist found to record of his favoured hero, while

all that he does relate of him tends to deepen our conviction that this favourite of heaven, in whose behalf miracles were freely worked, whom departed saints led on to victory and living ministers of God delighted to honour, was quite a phenomenon of evil in the moral world, from his combining in himself the opposite and apparently incompatible vices of the meanest treachery and the most audacious wickedness.

We can only account for this amazing obliquity of moral vision in such a man as Gregory, by ascribing it to the extraordinary value attached in those times (and would that we could say in those times only) to external acts of devotion, and to every service rendered to the Roman church. If, in far happier ages than those of which we speak, the most polluted consciences have purchased consolation and even hope by building churches, endowing monasteries, and paying reverential homage to the dispensers of God's mercy, can we wonder that the extraordinary services of a Clovis to Catholic Christianity should cover even his foul sins as with a cloak of snow?

He had, indeed, without the slightest provocation, deprived a noble and peaceable neighbour of his power and life. He had treacherously murdered his royal kindred, and deprived their children of their birthright. He had on all occasions shown himself the heartless ruffian, the greedy conqueror, the blood-thirsty tyrant; but by his conversion he had led the way to the triumph of Catholicism; he had saved the Roman church from the Scylla and Charybdis of heresy and paganism, planted it on a rock in the very centre of Europe, and fixed its doctrines and traditions in the hearts of the conquerors of the West.

Other reasons, again, may serve to reconcile the politician to his memory. The importance of the task which he performed (though from the basest motives), and the influence of his reign on the destinies of Europe, can hardly be overrated. He founded the monarchy on a firm and enduring basis. He levelled, with a strong though bloody hand, the barriers which separated Franks from Franks, and consolidated a number of isolated and hostile tribes into a powerful and united nation. It is true, indeed, that this unity was soon disturbed by divisions of a different nature; yet the idea of its feasibility and desirableness was deeply fixed in the national mind; a return to it was often aimed at, and sometimes accomplished.[q]

"The only conceivable palliation for any of the crimes which Clovis committed," says Hodgkin,[r] "would have been the advantage of securing the unity of the Frankish state. Yet that unity was immediately impaired by the division of his dominions among his four sons."

### SUCCESSORS OF CLOVIS TO PEPIN

In the reign of Clovis a new monarchy had been formed beyond the Rhine, that of the Thuringians, who, after their incorporation with other tribes, fell on the trans-Rhenish Franks. The latter implored the aid of their kindred tribes in Gaul: Thierry, the eldest, and Clotaire, another son of Clovis, carried the war into Thuringia. These princes triumphed over the enemy, whose rulers they exterminated, and whose country Thierry added to his possessions. Some of King Hermanfrid's children, however, escaped into Italy, whence, in the sequel, they appear to have returned and to have given rise to the ducal house of Thuringia. In the same manner the duchies of Swabia and Bavaria were added to the domains of Thierry; so that the empire of the Franks now extended from Bohemia to the British Channel,

and from the mouth of the Elbe to Languedoc and Toulouse. But it did not satisfy their ambition, which next turned towards Burgundy (523).

Clotilda, the widow of Clovis, whom superstition has canonised, remembered the massacre of her parents and brothers, and the dangers of her own infancy, and she instigated her sons to vengeance. Sigismund, the son of her uncle Gundebald, now occupied the throne of Burgundy. He too is honoured as a saint, though soon after his accession he had murdered his own son at the instigation of a second wife. Through the exhortations of the holy widow, her three sons Childebert, Clotaire, and Clodomir (Thierry, who was not her son, refused to have any part in the war) invaded the province, and defeated Sigismund. Clodomir took him captive, and threw him, with his wife and children, into a well. Godemar, brother of Sigismund, collected another army, defeated the Franks, and having gained possession of Clodomir — such is fate's retributive justice! — beheaded him. After the death of Clodomir, Clotaire, the second brother, who had two wives already, married the widow, and became the protector of his two infant sons.

CLOTAIRE
[Based on an old print]

Resolved to keep their inheritance, Childebert and Clotaire sent to Clotilda, their grandmother, a sword and a pair of scissors, wishing to know whether she preferred their death or their seclusion in the cloister. In the passion of the moment, she declared that she would rather see them dead than deprived of their rightful inheritance; and her words sealed their fate. Clotaire seized the elder, not ten years of age, and plunged a knife into his heart; the younger, who was not seven, terrified at the sight, knelt before Childebert, and pathetically prayed for life. Childebert was suddenly sensible of pity; and, with tears in his eyes, he begged that the child's life might be spared. "It was thyself that urged me to this!" replied the fiendish Clotaire: "give me the child, or die in his stead!" The survivor was immediately murdered; their nurses, pages, and servants shared the same fate, and the kingdom of Clodomir was divided between the two royal assassins. With an increased army, they again invaded Burgundy, which they conquered and divided between them, as they had before divided that of their brother Clodomir.

On the death of Thierry, in 534, he was succeeded by his son Theudibert, who inherited his martial character, and was consequently too formidable to be served like the sons of Clodomir. He headed several expeditions into Italy and Spain, which, however, were not distinguished by much success;

nor was his son and successor Theudebald (548–555) more fortunate. On the death of the latter, Clotaire, his uncle, married his widow and seized his kingdom, without dividing it with Childebert: the whole kingdom of the Franks was consequently in the hands of the two sons of Clovis. In revenge, Childebert excited a civil war; but dying before its conclusion (558), his kingdom was forcibly seized by Clotaire, now sole monarch of the Franks, who exiled his wife and daughters. A year before his death, Clotaire condemned to the fire his eldest son, who had rebelled against him, and that prince's wife and daughters, with as much coolness as he could have ordered the execution of the most guilty stranger. In fact, in the wide catalogue of human vices, there is scarcely one which was not practised by the abominable princes of this dynasty, whose memory will be held in everlasting execration.

To follow in detail the actions, in other words the crimes, of this detestable dynasty, would neither suit our limits nor gratify the reader: we must rapidly glance at the chief resolutions of the Frankish Empire. Like his father, Clotaire I at his death left four sons, and all four divided his states among them. This division was effected by lot. Austrasia, or eastern France, comprehending the provinces on both sides of the Rhine, and extending from Bar-sur-Aube into Bohemia, fell to Sigebert, who removed his capital from Rheims to Metz. Neustria, or western France, which extended from Bar to the channel, and even to the confines of Aquitaine, fell to Chilperic, whose court was at Soissons. Gontram, who had Burgundy, established himself at Châlons-sur-Saône; and Charibert, from Paris his capital, ruled over Aquitaine and a narrow slip of the intermediate country. But Charibert soon died, leaving his states to be divided among his three brothers.

The reader's mind is no doubt prepared for the same dissensions among the sons of Clotaire as among those of Clovis; he might peruse far more horrors, if either our limits or inclination disposed us to withdraw the veil which covered them. We will raise one corner. Sigebert and Chilperic were unusually hostile to each other, not so much through ambition as through the enmity of their wives, the famous Brunehild and Fredegund: the former was daughter of Athanagild, Visigothic king of Spain; the latter a low Frenchwoman, who, seeing herself rejected by Chilperic for Galeswintha, a sister of Brunehild, swore revenge not only against her rival but also against Sigebert and Brunehild.

Soon renewing her empire over the heart of Chilperic, Fredegund procured the murder of Galeswintha, and her own elevation as queen. She then incited her husband to a long war with Sigebert; but, as it was not so successful as she wished; and as Sigebert came near to dethroning herself and her husband, she avoided that fate by the dagger: in 575, the victor fell by one of her hired assassins. The victim was succeeded in the kingdom of Austrasia by his son Childebert II; but, as the prince was too young to govern, the administration devolved on a new functionary — the mayor of the palace, a grand judge and general of the kingdom. Brunehild was taken captive; and her fate would soon have been decided, had not Merovæus, the son of Chilperic, but not of Fredegund, fallen in love with her, and married her.

The newly married couple took sanctuary in the church of St. Martin at Tours, and were protected by the historian and bishop St. Gregory. Chilperic, however, separated them: he restored Brunehild to the Austrasians, who were arming in the cause of their monarch's mother; but Merovæus soon fell a victim to the persecutions of Fredegund. Clovis, another son of her husband by a former queen, Fredegund, no doubt with Chilperic's consent,

caused to perish by the dagger: so that now her own children only remained to inherit the kingdom of Neustria. But on the assassination of her husband, in 584, though she proclaimed her son Clotaire II, the army, detesting both her and her offspring, hailed Gundowald, a bastard of the deceased monarch, as their chief. Gundowald, however, who could not support his elevation, perished miserably; and his firmest support, St. Prætextatus, bishop of Rouen, fell under the sword of an assassin hired by Fredegund. In 593, Gontram, who was childless, paid the debt of nature, and Childebert of Austrasia seized Burgundy, to the prejudice of Clotaire II, the reputed heir.[1]

CLOVIS II
(From a French print, 1832)

On the death of Childebert, probably by poison, Austrasia fell to his eldest son Theudebert, aged only ten years; and Burgundy to his second, Thierry II, aged only nine. As Clotaire II, king of Neustria, was only eleven, the monarchy of the Franks was subject to three minors, or rather to the three mayors of the palace who governed in their name. In 612, Thierry II, with the aid of Clotaire, vanquished his brother Theudebert of Austrasia, whom he calmly put to death; the following year he suddenly died; his sons fell into the power of Clotaire, who was not likely to show much mercy to the offspring of his mother Fredegund's enemy. Two of the sons he murdered; a third, whom he had held over the baptismal font, he consented to save; and Brunehild, their grandmother, who at the same time became his captive, he caused to expire in the most cruel torments. [He tied her to the heels of a wild horse.] By these bloody executions he was, in 613, at the head of the whole Frankish Empire in Germany and Gaul.

Some years before his death, he caused Dagobert, his elder son, to be crowned king of Austrasia; and after that event (628), Aquitaine fell to his second, Charibert; but in three years Charibert died, his infant son was murdered by Dagobert, and unity was once more restored to the monarchy. But Dagobert, like all the princes of his name during the last century and a half of its existence, was as feeble in body as he was cruel in heart; like them, through his early vices he was overtaken by old age in the prime of life. On his death in 638, his states were divided between his two infant sons. Austrasia fell to Sigebert III; Neustria and Burgundy to Clovis II. The former was governed by the mayor, Pepin, subsequently by Grimwald, the son of Pepin; the latter by Ercinwald. Both princes died about the usual age, between twenty and twenty-five.[2]

[1 The absorption of the Burgundian kingdom by the Franks is vaguely reflected in the great German epic, the *Nibelungenlied*.]

### THE RISE OF PEPIN

The accession of the five-year-old Childebert II to the kingdom of Austrasia in 575 proved an excellent opportunity for the vassals to increase their power at the expense of the throne: and they elected a high palace official to assume the charge of rearing the young king and maintaining the peace.

It was not a new institution that the Austrasian nobles thus created. Since the house of the petty chief of Tournay had become the palace of the king of Gaul and his support a nursery of great officials and royal dignitaries, the antrustions, sometimes dispersed over the conquered territories, and again gathered around their prince, had preserved their relations with him and between themselves. The chief and his companions had grown great together, and men, become rich and powerful, continued to fill in the communal household the functions of *seneskalk* (senechal), of *mariskalk* (marshal), and of *skanke* (cupbearer); while he among the antrustions who exercised a general surveillance over the household, who took charge of the public welfare, and who sat in judgment over quarrels arising between vassals, was quite naturally the first officer of the palace, the intendant general of the crown domains, the prime minister, and the highest personage of the state after the king himself. We are not sure of the Germanic title of this official; it would seem that he was commonly called in the Teutonic language the *herzog*, the duke or leader *par excellence*. The Gallo-Romans called him the *major domus*, "the greatest, the first of the house," a qualification formerly given among the wealthy Romans to the freedman, or even the slave, who had authority over the other slaves and directed the management of the household.

Up to Childebert's accession, this mayor of the palace had been the creature of the king and his representative before the vassals, but now the Austrasian nobility made him the representative of the vassals before the king and the overseer of royalty. In this there was a complete revolution.[w]

On the death of Dagobert, 638 A.D., his son, Clovis II, a child of six years old, succeeded him. During his minority the government of Neustria and Burgundy was carried on by his mother Nanthildis, and the major-domus Æga, while Pepin and others shared the supreme power in Austrasia. Pepin died 639 or 640 A.D., and a long and ferocious contest ensued for the vacant mayoralty, which was finally taken possession of by Pepin's own son Grimwald. So low had the power of the nominal monarchs already sunk, that, on the death of Sigebert III, in 654 A.D., Grimwald ventured to shear the locks of the rightful heir, Dagobert II, and, giving out that he was dead, sent him to Ireland; he then proposed his own son for the vacant throne, under the pretence that Sigebert had adopted him. But the time was not yet ripe for so daring an usurpation, nor does Grimwald appear to have been the man to take the lead in a revolution. Both the attempt itself, and its miserable issue, go to prove that the son of Pepin did not inherit the wisdom and energy of the illustrious stock to which he belonged. The king of Burgundy and Neustria, pretending to acquiesce in the accession of Grimwald's son, summoned the father to Paris, and caused him to be seized during his journey by some Franks — who are represented as being highly indignant at his presumption — and put to death.

The whole Frankish Empire was thus once more united, at least in name, under Clovis II (who died in 656 A.D.), and under his son and successor, Clotaire III, whose mother, Balthildis, an Anglo-Saxon by birth, administered the kingdom with great ability and success. But the interests and

feelings of the German provinces were too distinct from those of Burgundy and Neustria to allow of their long remaining even nominally under one head. The Austrasians were eager to have a king of their own, and accordingly another son of Clovis was raised to the throne of Austrasia under the title of Childeric II, with Wulfwald as his major-domus.

At the death of Clotaire III in Neustria (in 670 A.D.) the whole empire was thrown into confusion by the ambitious projects of Ebroin, his major-domus, who sought to place Thierry III, Clothaire's youngest brother, who was still a mere child, on the throne, that he might continue to reign in his name. Ebroin appears to have proceeded towards his object with too little regard for the opinions and feelings of the other seigneurs, who rose against him and his puppet king, and drove them from the seat of power. The successful conspirators then offered the crown of Neustria to Childeric II, king of Austrasia, who immediately proceeded to take possession, while Ebroin sought refuge in a monastery. Childeric ascended the Neustrian throne without opposition; but his attempts to control the seigneurs, one of whom, named Badilo, he is said to have scourged, gave rise to a formidable conspiracy; and he was soon afterwards assassinated, together with his queen and son, at Chelles. Wulfwald escaped with difficulty, and returned to Austrasia. Another son of Childeric, Childebert III, was then raised upon the shield by the seigneurs, while the royal party brought forward Thierry III from the monastery to which he had retired, and succeeded in making good his claim. The turbulent and unscrupulous but able Ebroin ventured once more to leave his place of refuge, and by a long series of the most treacherous murders, and by setting up a pretender — as Clovis, a son of Clotaire III — he succeeded (in 673 or 674 A.D.) in forcing himself upon Thierry as major-domus of Neustria.

In the meantime Dagobert II, whom Grimwald had sent as a child to Ireland, and who had subsequently found a faithful friend in the well-known St. Wilfrid, bishop of York, was recalled and placed on the Austrasian throne. But the restored prince soon (in 679 A.D.) fell a victim to the intrigues of Ebroin, and the Neustrian faction among the seigneurs, who aimed at bringing the whole empire under their own arbitrary power. Nor does it seem at all improbable that the ability and audacity of Ebroin might have enabled them to carry out their designs, had not Austrasia possessed a leader fully equal to the emergency.

## PEPIN OF HERISTAL

Pepin, surnamed "of Heristal" from a castle belonging to his family in the neighbourhood of Liège, was the son of Ansegisus by Begga, the illustrious daughter of Pepin of Landen. This great man, who proved himself worthy of his grandsire and his mother, was at this time associated with Duke Martin in the government of Austrasia, which up to 678 A.D. had been administered by Wulfwald. Martin and Pepin summoned their followers to arms to meet the expected attack of the Neustrians. In the first instance, however, the Austrasians were surprised by the activity of Ebroin, who fell upon them before they had completed their preparations, and totally defeated them in the neighbourhood of Luco-Fago.[1] Martin fled to

[1 Henri Martin *w* says that *Luco-Fago* appears to be the same as *Latofao*, where a great battle had already been fought in 596, and which is identified with the village of *Lafaux* between Laon and Soissons.]

the town of Laon; and the artifices by which his enemies lured him from this retreat to his destruction are worthy of notice, as giving us a remarkable picture of the manners of the period in general and of the sad state of the church in particular.

Ebroin, hearing that his intended victim had reached a place of safety, despatched Agilbert bishop of Paris, and Probus bishop of Rheims, to persuade Martin to repair to the Neustrian camp. In order to dispel the apprehensions with which he listened to them, these holy men went through the not unusual ceremony of swearing, upon a receptacle containing sacred relics, that he should suffer no injury by following their advice. The bishops, however, to save themselves from the guilt of perjury, had taken care that the vessels, which were covered, should be left empty. Martin, whom they omitted to inform of this important fact, was satisfied with their oaths, and accompanied them to Ecri, where he and his followers were immediately assassinated, without, as was thought, any detriment to the faith of the envoys! Pepin, however, was neither to be cajoled nor frightened into submission, and soon found himself at the head of a powerful force, consisting in part of Neustrian exiles, whom the tyranny of Ebroin had ruined or offended. A collision seemed inevitable, when the position of affairs was suddenly changed by the death of Ebroin, who was assassinated in 681 A.D. by Hermenfrid, a distinguished Neustrian Frank. Waratto followed him in the mayoralty of Neustria, and seemed inclined to live on friendly terms with Pepin: but Ghislemar, his son, who headed the party most hostile to Pepin, succeeded in getting possession of the government for a time, and renewed the war against the Austrasians. Ghislemar's death (in 684 A.D.), which the annalists attributed to the divine anger, restored Waratto to his former power; and hostilities ceased for a time. When Waratto also died, about two years after his undutiful son, he was succeeded by Berchar, his son-in-law, whom the annalist pithily describes as *statura parvus, intellectu modicus*.

A LOMBARD KING

The insolent disregard which this man showed for the feelings and wishes of the most powerful Neustrians, induced many of them to make common cause with Pepin, to whom they are said to have bound themselves by hostages. In 687 A.D. Pepin was strong enough to assume the offensive; and, yielding to the entreaties of the Neustrian refugees, he sent an embassy to Thierry III to demand the restoration of the exiles to their confiscated lands. The king of Neustria, prompted by Berchar, his major-domus, haughtily replied that he would come himself and fetch his runaway slaves. Pepin then prepared for war, with the unanimous consent of the Austrasian seigneurs, whose wishes he scrupulously consulted. Marching through the Silva Carbonaria he entered the Neustrian territory, and took post at Textri

(Testry) on the river Somme. Thierry and Berchar also collected a large army and marched to meet the invaders. The two armies encamped in sight of each other near the village of Textri, on opposite sides of the little river Daumignon, the Neustrians on the southern and the Austrasians on the northern bank. Whether from policy or a higher motive, Pepin displayed great unwillingness, even then, to bring the matter to extremities; and, sending emissaries into the camp of Thierry, he once more endeavoured to negotiate; demanding, amongst other things, that the property of which the churches had been "despoiled by wicked tyrants" should be restored to them. He promised that, if his conditions of peace were accepted and the effusion of kindred blood prevented, he would give the king a large amount of silver and gold.

The wise and humane reluctance of Pepin was naturally construed by Thierry and his "little-minded" mayor into fear, and distrust of his army, which was inferior to their own in numbers; a haughty answer was returned, and all negotiations were broken off. Both sides then prepared for the morrow's battle. Pepin, having passed the night in forming his plans, crossed the river before daybreak and drew up his army to the east of Thierry's position, that the rising sun might blind the enemy. The spies of Thierry reported that the Austrasian camp was deserted, on which the Neustrians were led out to pursue the flying foe. The mistake of the scouts was soon made clear by the vigorous onset of Pepin; and after a fierce but brief combat the Neustrians were totally defeated, and Thierry and Berchar fled from the field. The latter was slain by his own followers; the king was taken prisoner, but his life was mercifully spared.

The battle of Textri is notable in Frankish history as that in which the death-stroke was given to the Merovingian dynasty, by an ancestor of a far more glorious race of monarchs. "From this time forward," says the chronicler Erchanbertus,[y] "the kings began to have only the royal name, and not the royal dignity." A very striking picture of the Rois Fainéants has been handed down to us by Einhard[u] (Eginhard), in his famous biography of Charlemagne which we quote in Chapter V. "The race of the Merovingians," he says, "from which the Franks were formerly accustomed to choose their kings, is generally considered to have ended with Chilperic; who, at the command of the Roman pontiff Stephen, was deposed, shorn of his locks, and sent into a monastery. But although the stock died out with him, it had long been entirely without life and vigour, and had no distinction beyond the empty title of king; for the authority and government were in the hands of the highest officers of the palace, who were called majores-domus, and had the entire administration of affairs. Nothing was left to the king, except that, contenting himself with the mere royal name, he was allowed to sit on the throne with long hair and unshorn beard, to play the part of a ruler, to hear the ambassadors from whatever part they might come, and at their departure to communicate to them the answers which he had been taught or even commanded to make, as if by his own authority. Besides the worthless title of king and a scanty maintenance, which the major-domus meted out according to his pleasure, the king possessed only one farm, and that by no means a lucrative one, on which he had a dwelling-house and a few servants, just sufficient to supply his most urgent necessities. Wherever he had to go, he travelled in a carriage drawn by a yoke of oxen and driven by a cowherd in rustic fashion. It was thus that he went to the palace, to the public assembly of the people, which met every year for the good of the kingdom; after which he returned home. But the whole

administration of the state, and everything which had to be regulated or executed, either at home or abroad, was carried on by the mayors."

The whole power of the three kingdoms was thus suddenly thrown into the hands of Pepin, who showed in his subsequent career that he was equal to the far more difficult task of keeping, by his wisdom and moderation, what he had gained by the vigour of his intellect and his undaunted valour. He, too, was happily free from the little vanity which takes more delight in the pomp than in the realities of power, and, provided he possessed the substantial authority, was contented to leave the royal name to others. He must have felt himself strong enough to do what his uncle Grimwald had vainly attempted, and his grandson happily accomplished; but he saw that by grasping at the shadow he might lose the substance. He was surrounded by proud and suspicious seigneurs, whose jealousy would have been more excited by his taking the title than by his exercising the powers of a king; and, strange though it may seem, the reverence for the ancient race, and the notion of their exclusive and inalienable rights, were far from being extinguished in the breasts of the common people. By keeping Thierry upon the throne and ruling in his name, he united both reason and prejudice in support of his government. Yet some approach was made, though probably not by his own desire, towards acknowledged sovereignty in the case of Pepin. He was called *dux et princeps Francorum*, and the years of his office were reckoned, as well as those of the king, in all public documents.

Having fixed the seat of his government in Austrasia, as the more German and warlike portion of his dominions, he named dependents of his own, and subsequently his two sons, Drogo and Grimwald, to rule as mayors in the two other divisions of the empire. He gave the greatest proof of his power and popularity by restoring the assemblies of the Campus Martius, a purely German institution, which under the romanising Merovingian monarchs had gradually declined. At these annual meetings, which were held on the 1st of March, the whole nation assembled for the purpose of discussing measures for the ensuing year. None but a ruler who was conscious of his own strength, and of an honest desire for the welfare of his people, would have voluntarily submitted himself and his actions to the chances of such an ordeal.

As soon as he had firmly fixed himself in his seat, and secured the submission of the envious seigneurs, and the love of the people, who looked to him as the only man who could save them from the evils of anarchy, he turned his attention to the re-establishment of the Frankish Empire in its full extent. The neighbouring tribes, which had with difficulty, and for the most part imperfectly, been subdued by Clovis and his successors, were ready to seize upon every favourable occasion of ridding themselves of the hated yoke. Nor were the poor imbecile boys who bore the name of kings, nor the turbulent mayors and seigneurs who were wholly occupied with plotting and counterplotting, railing and fighting against one another, at all in a position to call the subject states to account, or to excite in them the desire of being incorporated with an empire harassed and torn by intestine dissensions. The Frankish Empire was in process of dissolution, and all the more distant tribes, as the Bavarians, the Alamanni, Frisians, Bretons, and Gascons, had virtually recovered their independence. But this partial decline of the Frankish power was simply the result of misgovernment, and the domestic feuds which absorbed the martial vigour of the nation; and by no means indicated the decline of a military spirit in the Frankish people. They only needed a centre of union and a leader worthy of them,

both of which they found in Pepin, to give them once more the hegemony over all the German tribes, and prepare them for the conquest of Europe. The Frisians were subdued, or rather repressed for a time, in 697 A.D., after a gallant resistance under their king Ratbod; and about twelve years afterwards we find the son of Pepin, Grimwald, forming a matrimonial alliance with Theudelinda, daughter of the Frisian monarch; a fact which plainly implies that Pepin desired to cultivate the friendship of his warlike neighbours. The Swabians, or Alamanni, were also attacked and defeated by Pepin on their own territories; but their final subjection was completed by his son Charles Martel.

The wars carried on by Pepin with the above-mentioned nations, to which in this place we can only briefly allude, occupied him nearly twenty years; and were greatly instrumental in preserving peace at home, and consolidating the foundations of the Carlovingian throne. The stubborn resistance he met with from the still heathen Germans, was animated with something of that zeal, against which his great descendant Charlemagne had to contend in his interminable Saxon wars; for the adoption of Christianity, which was hated, not only as being hostile to the superstitions of their forefathers, but on account of the heavy taxes by which it was accompanied, was always made by Pepin the indispensable condition of mercy and peace. But, happily for the cause of Gospel truth, other means were used for the spread of Christianity than the sword and the scourge; and the labours of many a zealous and self-sacrificing missionary from Ireland and England served to convince the rude German tribes that the warrior-priests whom they had met on the battle-field, and the greedy tax-gatherers who infested their homes, were not the true ambassadors of the Prince of peace. And Pepin, who was by no means a mere warrior, was well aware of the value of these peaceful efforts; and afforded zealous aid to all who ventured their lives in the holy cause of human improvement and salvation. The civil governors whom he established in the conquered provinces were directed to do all in their power to promote the spread of Christianity by peaceful means; and, to give effect to his instructions, Pepin warned them that he should hold them responsible for the lives of his pious missionaries.

During these same twenty years, in which Pepin was playing the important and brilliant part assigned to him by providence, the pale and bloodless shadows of four Merovingian kings flit gloomily across the scene. We know little or nothing of them except their names, and the order in which they followed each other. Thierry III died in 691 A.D., and was succeeded by Clovis III, who reigned till 695 A.D. and was followed by Childebert III. On the death of Childebert in 711 A.D., Pepin raised Dagobert III to the nominal throne, where he left him when he himself departed from the scene of his labours and triumphs; and this is really all that we feel called upon to say of the descendants of the conquerors of Gaul and founders of the Western Empire; *inclitum et notum olim, nunc tantum auditur!*

The extraordinary power which Pepin exercised at a period when law was weak, and authority extended no further than the sword could reach; when the struggles of the rising feudal aristocracy for independence had convulsed the empire and brought it to the verge of anarchy, sufficiently attests the ability and courage, the wisdom and moderation, with which he ruled. His triumphs over the ancient dynasty, and the Neustrian faction, were far from being the most difficult of his achievements. He had to control the very class to which he himself belonged; to curb the turbulent spirits of the very men who had raised him to his proud pre-eminence; and

to establish regal authority over those by whose aid he had humbled the ancient kings: and all this he succeeded in doing by the extraordinary influence of his personal character. So firmly indeed had he established his government, and subdued the wills of the envious seigneurs by whom he was surrounded, that even when he showed his intention of making his power hereditary in his family, they dared not, at the time, oppose his will. On the death of Norbert, major-domus at the court of Childebert III, Pepin — in all probability without even consulting the seigneurs, in whom the right of election rested — appointed his second son Grimwald to the vacant office. To his eldest son Drogo he had already given the mayoralty of Burgundy, with the title of duke of Campania. But though they dared not make any opposition at the time, it is evident from what followed that the fear of Pepin alone restrained the rage they felt at this open usurpation. In 714 A.D., when Pepin's life was drawing to a close, and he lay at Jupille near Liège upon a bed of sickness, awaiting patiently his approaching end, the great vassals took heart, and conspired to deprive his descendants of the mayoralty. They employed the usual means for effecting their purpose — treachery and murder. Grimwald was assassinated, while praying in the church of St. Lambert at Jupille, by a Frisian of the name of Rantgar, who relied, no doubt, on the complicity of the seigneurs and the weakness of Pepin for impunity. But the conspirators had miscalculated the waning sands of the old warrior's life, and little knew the effect which the sight of his son's blood would have upon him. He suddenly recovered from the sickness to which he seemed to be succumbing. Like another Priam, he once more seized his unaccustomed arms, though, unlike the royal Trojan, he used them with terrible effect. After taking an ample revenge upon the murderers of his son, and quenching the spirit of resistance in the blood of the conspirators, he was so far from giving up his purpose, or manifesting any consciousness of weakness, that he nominated the infant and illegitimate son of Grimwald, as if by hereditary right, to the joint mayoralty of Burgundy and Neustria — an office which the highest persons in the land would have been proud to exercise. By his very last act, therefore, he showed the absolute mastery he had obtained, not only over the "do-nothing" kings, but over the factious seigneurs, who shrank in terror before the wrath of one, who had, as it were, repassed the gates of death, to hurl destruction on their heads. His actual demise took place in the same year, on the 16th of December, 714 A.D.

CLOVIS III
(From a French print of 1832)

Pepin had two wives, the first of whom, Plectrudis, bore him two sons, Drogo and Grimwald, neither of whom survived their father. In 688 A.D. he married a second wife, the "noble and elegant" Alpaida, though Plectrudis was still alive. From this second marriage sprang the real successor of the

Pepins, whom his father named in his own language Karl, and who is renowned in history as Charles Martel, the bulwark of Christendom, the father of kings and emperors.

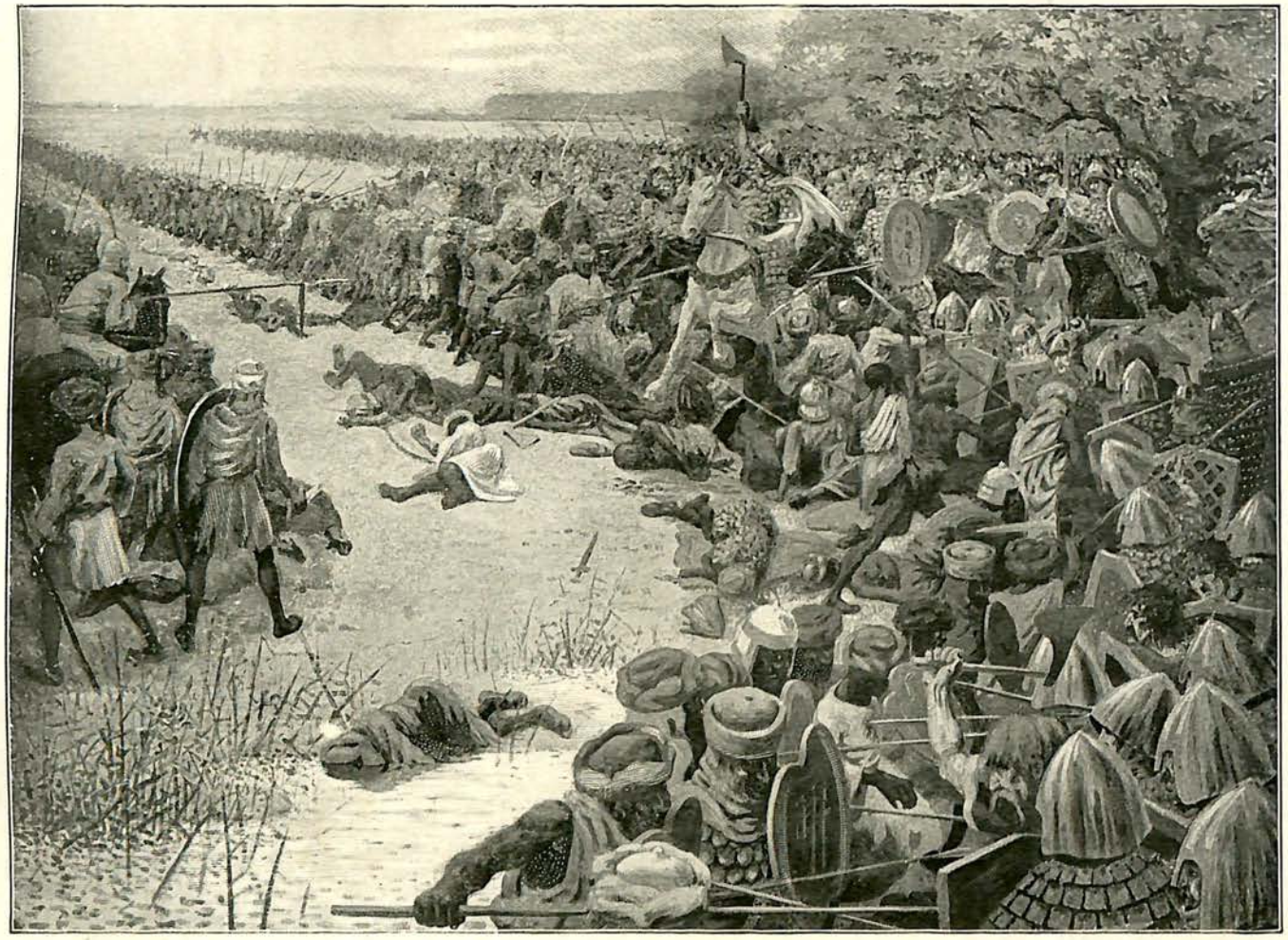
Our estimate of the personal greatness of the Carlovingian mayors is greatly raised when we observe that each of them in turn, instead of taking quiet possession of what his predecessors had won, has to reconquer his position in the face of numerous, powerful, and exasperated enemies. It was so with Pepin of Landen, with Pepin of Heristal, and most of all in the case of Charles Martel.

### THE CAREER OF CHARLES MARTEL (714–732 A.D.)

At the death of Pepin the storm which had long been gathering, and of which many forebodings had appeared in his lifetime, broke forth with tremendous fury. The bands of government were suddenly loosened, and the powers which Pepin had wielded with such strength and dexterity became the objects of a ferocious struggle. Plectrudis, his first wife, an ambitious and daring woman, had resolved to reign as the guardian of her grandchild, Theudwald, with whom she was at that time residing at Cologne. Theudwald had at least the advantage of being the only candidate for power installed by Pepin himself, and it was no doubt upon his quasi-hereditary claims that Plectrudis based her hopes. She manifested her foresight, discrimination, and energy, at the commencement of the contest which ensued by seizing the person of Charles, her stepson, and most formidable rival. But Charles and his party were not her only opponents. The Neustrians and Burgundians, whom their recollections of Brunehild and Fredegund by no means inclined to acquiesce in another female regency, refused obedience to her commands; and endeavoured to excite the puppet-monarch Dagobert to an independent exercise of his authority. Their zeal as Neustrians too was quickened by the desire of throwing off the Austrasian or German yoke, which they considered to have been fixed upon them by the victories and energetic rule of Pepin.

It was owing to this hostile feeling between the Romance and the German portions of the empire that many even of Pepin's partisans took side with Theudwald and Plectrudis, although the latter held their chief incarcerated. The revolted Neustrians and the army of Plectrudis encountered each other in the forest of Guise, near Compiègne; and, as far as one can conjecture from the confused and contradictory accounts of the annalists, Plectrudis and Theudwald suffered a defeat. The Neustrians having obtained the mastery over the hated Germans in their own country, prepared to extend their authority to Austrasia itself. Having chosen Raginfrid as their major-domus, they suddenly marched into the Austrasian territory, and laid it waste with fire and sword as far as the river Maas. In spite of their Christian profession they sought further to strengthen themselves by an alliance with Ratbod, the heathen king of the Frisians, who at the death of Pepin had recovered his independence, and the greater portion of his territory.

In the meantime, the whole aspect of affairs was suddenly changed by the escape of Charles from custody. The defeated army of Plectrudis, and many of the Austrasian seigneurs, who were unwilling to support her cause even against the Neustrians, now rallied with the greatest alacrity around the youthful hero, and proclaimed him *Dux Francorum* by the title of his glorious father. In a very short time after the recovery of his freedom,



THE BATTLE OF TOURS

Charles found himself at the head of a very efficient, though not numerous army. He was still, however, surrounded by dangers and difficulties, under which a man of less extraordinary powers must inevitably have sunk.

Dagobert III died soon after the battle of Compiègne; and the Neustrians, who had felt the disadvantage of his imbecility, neglected the claims of his son, and raised a priest called Daniel, a reputed son of Childeric, to the throne, with the title of Chilperic II. This monarch, who appears to have had a greater degree of energy than his immediate predecessors, formed a plan with the Frisian king for a combined attack upon Cologne, by which he hoped at once to bring the war to a successful issue. Ratbod, true to his engagements, advanced with a numerous fleet of vessels up the Rhine, while Chilperic and Raginfrid were marching towards Cologne through the forest of Ardennes. To prevent this well-planned junction, Charles determined to fall upon the Frisians before they reached Cologne. His position must have been rendered still more critical by the failure of this attack. We read that after both parties had suffered considerable loss in a hard-fought battle, they retreated on equal terms.

The short time which elapsed before the arrival of the Neustrians was spent by Charles in summoning his friends from every quarter, to assist him in the desperate struggle in which he was engaged. In the meantime Chilperic came up, and, encamping in the neighbourhood of Cologne, effected a junction with the Frisians. Contrary to expectation, however, no attack was made upon Plectrudis, who is said to have bribed the Frisians to retire. A better reason for the precipitate retreat of the Neustrians and Frisians (which now took place) was the danger which the former ran of having their retreat cut off by Charles, who had taken up a strong position in their rear, with continually increasing forces; as it was, they were not permitted to retire in safety. Charles attacked them at Amblava, near Stablo, in the Ardennes, and gave them a total defeat. This victory put him in possession of Cologne, and the person of Plectrudis, who restored to him his father's treasures.

In the following year, 717 A.D., Charles assumed the offensive, and, marching through the Silva Carbonaria, began to lay waste the Neustrian territory. Chilperic and Raginfrid advanced to meet him, doubtless with far less confidence than before; and both armies encamped at Vincy, in the territory of Cambray. Charles, with an hereditary moderation peculiarly admirable in a man of his warlike spirit, sent envoys to the Neustrian camp to offer conditions of peace; and to induce Chilperic to acknowledge his claim to the office of major-domus in Austrasia, "that the blood of so many noble Franks might not be shed." Charles himself can have expected no other fruit from these overtures than the convincing of his own followers of the unreasonableness of their enemies. The Neustrian king and his evil adviser rejected the proffered terms with indignation, and declared their intention of taking from Charles even that portion of his inheritance which had already fallen into his hands. Both sides then prepared for battle; Charles, as we are expressly told, having first communicated to the chief men in his camp the haughty and threatening answer of the king. Chilperic relied on his great superiority in numbers, though his army was drawn, for the most part, from the dregs of the people: Charles prepared to meet him with a small but highly disciplined force of well-armed and skilful warriors. In the battle which ensued on the 21st of March, the Neustrians were routed with tremendous loss, and pursued by the victors to the very gates of Paris. But Charles was not yet in a condition to keep possession of Neustria, and he therefore led

his army back to Cologne, and ascended the "throne of his kingdom," as the annalist already calls it, the *dignissimus hæres* of his mighty father.

The unfortunate Chilperic, unequal as he must have felt himself to cope with a warrior like Charles, was once more induced by evil counsellors to renew the war. With this view he sought the alliance of the imperfectly subjected neighbouring states, whom the death of Pepin had awakened to dreams of independence. Of these the foremost was Aquitaine, which had completely emancipated itself from Frankish rule. The Aquitania of the Roman Empire extended, as is well known, from the Pyrenees to the river Loire. This country, at the dissolution of the Western Empire, had fallen into the hands of the Visigoths, and was subsequently conquered, and to a certain extent subjugated, by the earlier Merovingians. But, though nominally part of the Frankish Empire, it continued to enjoy a semi-independence under its native dukes, and remained for many ages a stone of offence to the Frankish rulers. Its population, notwithstanding the admixture of German blood consequent on the Gothic conquest, had remained pre-eminently Roman in its character, and had attained in the seventh century to an unusual degree of wealth and civilisation. The southern part of Aquitaine had been occupied by a people called Vascones or Gascons, who extended themselves as far as the Garonne, and had also submitted to the Frankish rule during the better days of the elder dynasty.

The temporary collapse of the Frankish power consequent upon the bloody feuds of the royal house, and the struggle between the seigneurs and the crown, enabled Eudes, the duke of Aquitaine, to establish himself as a perfectly independent prince; and he and his sons ruled in full sovereignty over both Aquitaine and Gascony, and were called indifferently *Aquitaniæ* or *Vasconiæ duces*.

Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that Eudo should gladly receive the presents and overtures made to him by Chilperic; who agreed to leave him in quiet possession of the independence he had contumaciously asserted, on condition of his making cause against the Austrasian mayor. He lost no time in leading an army of Gascons to Paris, where he joined his forces to those of Chilperic, and prepared to meet the terrible foe. Charles advanced with his usual rapidity, and having laid waste a portion of Neustria, came upon the enemy in the neighbourhood of Soissons. The new allies, who had scarcely had time to consolidate their union and mature their plans, appear to have made but a feeble resistance; and Chilperic, not considering himself safe even in Paris, fled with his treasures, in company with Eudo, into Aquitaine. Raginfrid, the Neustrian major-domus, who with a division of the combined army had also made an attempt to check Charles' progress, was likewise defeated and compelled to resign his mayoralty; as a compensation for which he received from the placable conqueror the countship of Anjou.

The victorious Austrasians pursued the fugitives as far as the river Loire and Orleans, from which place Charles sent an embassy to Eudes, and offered him terms of peace, on condition of his delivering up Chilperic and his treasures. It is difficult to say what answer Eudo, hemmed in as he was on all sides (for the Saracens were in his rear), might have given to this demand — whether he would have consulted his own interests, or his duty to his ally and guest. But the opportune death of Clotaire, whom Charles had made king of Austrasia after the battle of Amblava, relieved him from his dilemma. Charles, who was remarkably free from the evil spirit of revenge, declared his readiness to acknowledge Chilperic II as king, on

[720-727 A.D.]

condition of being himself appointed major-domus of the united kingdoms of Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy. These terms, offered by the victor to one whose very life was at his mercy, could not but be eagerly accepted; and thus, in 720 A.D., Charles became nominally mayor of the palace to King Chilperic II, but, in fact, undisputed master of the king himself and the whole Frankish empire.

The temperate course pursued by Charles in these transactions, proceeded in a great measure from the natural moderation of his character. [Chilperic died in 720, and Charles invested Thierry IV, son of Dagobert III, with the royal title. But when Thierry died (737) the major-domus made no attempt to fill the vacant throne.]

CHILPERIC II
(From a French cut of 1832)

After the death of Ratbod, the "cruel and pagan" king of the Frisians, in 719 A.D., Charles recovered the western portion of Friesland, and reduced the Frisians to their former state of uncertain subjection. About the same time he repelled the Saxons, those unwearied and implacable enemies of the Frankish name, who had broken into the Frankish *gaus* on the right bank of the Rhine. We know little of the particulars of these campaigns, since the chroniclers content themselves with recording in general terms that the "invincible Charles" was always victorious, and his enemies utterly destroyed; a statement which is rendered suspicious by the fact that their annihilation has to be repeated frequently, and at no long intervals.

In the year after the Saxon campaign (the date of which is rather uncertain), Charles crossed the Rhine, and attacked the Alamanni (in Würtemberg) in their own country, which he devastated without any serious opposition. Subsequently, about 725 A.D., he crossed the Danube, and entered the country of the Bavarians; and after two successful campaigns obliged that nation also to acknowledge their allegiance to the Franks. From this expedition, says the chronicler, "he returned by the Lord's assistance to his own dominions with great treasures and a certain matron, by name Piltrudis, and her niece Sonihilde." This latter, who is called by Einhard "Swanahilde, the niece of Odilo," subsequently became one of Charles' wives, and the mother of the unfortunate Grifo.

It seems natural to conjecture, that Charles had an important ulterior object before his mind in these extraordinary and sustained exertions. They were but the prelude to the grand spectacle soon to be presented to an admiring world, in which this mighty monarch with the humble name was to play a conspicuous and glorious part. A contest awaited him, which he must long have foreseen with mingled feelings of eagerness and apprehension, and into

which he dared not go unprepared; a contest which required the highest exercise of his own active genius, and the uncontrolled disposal of all the material resources of his empire. He had hitherto contended for his hereditary honours against his personal enemies — for the supremacy of the Germans over the Gallo-Romans, of his own tribe over kindred German tribes — and finally, for order and good government against anarchy and faction. Hereafter he was to renew the old struggle between the West and East — to be the champion of Christianity and German institutions, against the false and degrading faith of Mohammed, and all the corrupting and enervating habits of the oriental world.

The most sober history of the rise and progress of Islamism, and the Arabian empire, which was founded on it, has all the characteristics of an eastern fable. In the beginning of the seventh century, an Arabian of the priestly house of Hashim retired into a cave at Mecca, to brood over the visions of a powerful but morbid imagination. The suggestions of his own distempered mind, and the impulses of his own strong will, were mistaken for the inspiration and the commands of the Almighty, concerning whom his notions were in part adopted from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. He learned to regard himself as the chosen instrument of God, for the introduction of a new faith and the establishment of a power, before which all the nations of the earth should bow.

When his meditations had assumed consistency, he shaped them into a system of faith and practice, which he confidently proposed for the acceptance of mankind, as the most perfect and glorious expression of the divine mind and will. His belief in himself, in his own infallibility, and the perfection of his system, was so absolute, that he regarded all other men in the light of children, who, if they cannot be persuaded, must be forced, into the right path. The sword was the only logic he considered suitable to the case; and death or the *Koran* was the sole alternative which his followers thought fit to offer.

For a time the lofty pretensions of the prophet were acknowledged only by a few, and those few belonged to his own family. But his system, springing as it did from an eminently oriental mind, was wonderfully adapted to the wants and tastes of oriental nations. But while the sublimity of certain doctrines afforded suitable objects of contemplation to the nobler faculties of the soul, the strongest passions of fallen human nature, pride, revenge, and lust, were not denied their appropriate gratification. What could be more acceptable to the natural man than a system which quiets the conscience amidst the excesses of sensual love, which takes away the necessity for self-discipline by the doctrine of fatalism, which teaches men to look down with a lofty contempt upon all who think differently from themselves, and, lastly, holds out as a reward for the coercion and destruction of opponents an eternity of voluptuous enjoyment in the society of celestial courtesans?

There is no doubt that much was done by the sword of the hardy and impetuous sons of Ishmael, but this could not alone have spread the *Koran* over half the world; the very faults which make it odious in Christian eyes, gave wings to its progress, and excited in its favour a deep and frenzied devotion.

In 622 A.D. Mohammed was obliged to flee to Medina, from the virulent opposition of the members of his own tribe. Within ninety years from that time his successors and disciples had conquered and converted, not Arabia alone, but Syria, Persia, Palestine, Phœnicia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Armenia,

the country between the Black Sea and the Caspian, a portion of India, and the whole of the north of Africa from the Nile to the Atlantic Ocean.

The year 710 A.D. found them gazing with longing eyes across the straits of Gibraltar, eager for the time when they might plant upon the rock of Calpe the meteor standard of their prophet; and thence survey the beautiful and fertile country which was soon to be their own. Nor were their hopes deferred: their entrance into Spain, which might have proved difficult if not impossible to effect in the face of a brave and united people, was rendered safe and easy by treachery, cowardice, and theological dissensions.

The first collision, indeed, of the Arabian conquerors with the warriors of the West was rather calculated to damp their hopes of European conquest. The Visigothic kings of Spain possessed the town of Ceuta on the African coast, of which Count Julian, at the time of which we speak, was military governor. The skill and courage of this great warrior and his garrison had hitherto frustrated all the attempts of Musa, the general of the caliph Walid, to make himself master of the place. The Saracens were already beginning to despair of success, when they suddenly received overtures from Count Julian himself, who now offered, not merely to open the gates of Ceuta, but to procure for the Saracens a ready admittance into Spain. The grounds of this sudden treachery on the part of one who had risked his life at the post of honour, cannot be stated with any degree of certainty. By some it was ascribed to the desire of avenging himself upon Roderic, his king, who is said to have abused his daughter; and by others to the fact that he had espoused the cause of Witiza's sons, at that time pretenders to the Spanish throne. The Saracen general Musa, delighted to have found the Achilles-heel of Europe, immediately despatched a few hundred Moslems across the strait, under the command of Tarik; from whom the modern Gibraltar (Gebel al-Tarik) derives its name. These adventurers were well received in the town and castle of Count Julian at Algeciras, and soon returned to their expectant comrades, with rich booty and exciting tales of the fertility of the country, and the effeminacy of the degenerate Goths.

In the April of the following year, 711 A.D., a body of five thousand Saracens effected a landing on the coast of Spain, and entrenched themselves strongly near the Rock of Gibraltar. These were soon followed by other troops, until a considerable Moslem army was collected on the Spanish shores. The feeble resistance made to this descent was a fatal omen for the empire of the Visigoths. This once brave and hardy tribe of Germans had lost, during a long peace, the valour and endurance to which they owed the rich provinces of Spain; and, amidst the pleasures of that luxurious country, had grown so unaccustomed to the use of arms, that it was long before they could be roused to meet the foe. At length, however, the unwarlike Roderic, having collected an army four times as great as that of the enemy, but without confidence either in their leader or themselves, encamped at Xeres de la Frontera, in the neighbourhood of Cadiz. While awaiting at this place the approach of the enemy, the Gothic king is represented as sitting in an ivory chariot, arrayed in silken garments unworthy of a man even in time of peace, and wearing a golden crown upon his head. The battle which quickly followed was fought on the 26th of July, 711 A.D. It was of short duration and of no doubtful issue. The timid herd of Goths, scarcely awaiting the wild charge of the Saracens, turned and fled in irretrievable confusion. Roderic himself, fit leader of such an army, was among the first to leave the

field on the back of a fleet racer, which had been placed, at his desire, in the neighbourhood of his tent, as if his trembling heart had foreseen the issue.

The Visigothic empire in Spain fell by a single blow. Tarik advanced with his victorious army as far as Cordova (Corduba), which immediately yielded at his summons; and he would, without doubt, have overrun the whole of Spain, had he not been recalled by the jealousy of Musa, who reserved for himself the glory of completing the splendid conquest.

Of all the Spanish towns which were captured on this occasion, Seville and Merida alone appear to have upheld the ancient glories of the Gothic name; but even these were finally reduced, and the last remnants of the Visigoths were driven from the rich plains they had so long possessed into the mountains of Asturias. It was in these rugged solitudes, and amidst the hardships and privations which they there endured, that they regained their ancient vigour, and preserved their Christian faith. It was thence that at a later period they descended upon their Moorish foes, and in many a hard-fought battle, the frequent theme of ballad and romaunt, recovered, step by step, the fair possessions which their ancestors had won and lost.

And thus by a single victory Spain was added to the vast dominions of the caliph, and the cross once more retired before the crescent. Nor did it seem that the Pyrenees, any more than the Rock of Gibraltar, were to prove a barrier to the devastating flood of Islamism. About 718 A.D., Zama, the Arabian viceroy of Spain, made himself master of that portion of Gaul, on the slopes of the eastern Pyrenees, of which the Goths had hitherto retained possession. In 731 A.D. he stormed Narbonne, the capital of the province, and having put all the male inhabitants capable of bearing arms to the sword, he sent away the women and children into captivity. He then pushed forward into Aquitaine, and laid siege to Toulouse, which proved the limit of his progress; for it was there that he was defeated by Eudo, the duke of the country, who was roused to a desperate effort by the danger of his capital. The check thus given to the onward march of the Moslems was of short duration. Anbasa, the successor of Zama, about four years afterwards once more made a movement in advance. Taking a more easterly direction, he stormed and plundered Carcassonne and Nîmes (Nemausus); and having devastated the country as far as the Rhone, returned laden with booty across the Pyrenees.

Duke Eudes of Aquitaine, deprived of the fruits of his single victory, resigned all hopes of successfully resisting the invaders, and endeavoured to preserve himself from utter ruin by an alliance with his formidable foes. He is even said to have so far belied his character of Christian prince as to give his own daughter in marriage, or concubinage, to Munuza, the governor of the newly made Gallic conquests.

It appears that the expeditions of the Saracens into Gaul had been hitherto made by individual generals on a comparatively small scale, and on their own responsibility. The unusually slow progress of their arms at this period, is to be ascribed less to any fear of opposition, than to inward dissensions in the Arabian empire, and a rapid succession of caliphs singularly unlike in their characters and views. Nine short years (715–724 A.D.) had seen the cruel Solaiman succeeded by the severe, yet just and upright Omar, the luxurious epicurean Yazid, and the little-minded, calculating Hisham.

It is probable, therefore, that, amid more pressing anxieties and interests, the distant conquest of Spain was forgotten or neglected by the court at Damascus; and that the generals, who commanded in that country, were apt to indulge in ideas inconsistent with their real position as satraps and

slaves of an imperial master. But a change was at hand, and the new actor Abderrahman (Abd al-Rahman), who suddenly appeared upon the scene with an army of four hundred thousand men, was charged with a twofold commission, — to chastise the presumption of Munuza, whose alliance with Eudo was regarded with suspicion, — and to bring the whole of Gaul under the sceptre of the caliph and the law of Mohammed. Regarding Munuza as a rebel and a semi-apostate, Abderrahman besieged him in the town of Cerdagne, to which he fled for refuge, and, having driven him to commit suicide, sent his head, together with his wife, the daughter of Eudes, as a welcome present to the caliph Hisham.

The victorious Saracens then marched on past Pampeluna,[1] and, making their way through the narrow defiles on the western side of the Pyrenean chain, poured down upon the plains with their innumerable hosts as far as the river Garonne. The city of Bordeaux was taken and sacked, and still they pressed on impetuously and without opposition, until they reached the river Dordogne, where Eudes, burning with rage at the treatment which his daughter had received, made a fruitless attempt to stop them. Irritated rather than checked by his feeble efforts, the overwhelming tide poured on. The standard of the prophet soon floated from the towers of Poitiers, and even Tours, the city of the holy St. Martin, was in danger of being polluted by the presence of insulting infidels, when, in the hour of Europe's greatest dread and danger, the champion of Christendom appeared at last, to do battle with the hitherto triumphant enemies of the cross.

It seems strange at first sight that the danger, which had so long been threatening Europe from the side of Spain, should not have called forth an earlier and more effectual resistance from those whose national and religious existence was at stake. Abderrahman had now made his way into the very centre of modern France; had taken and plundered some of the wealthiest towns in the Frankish Empire; and, after burning or desecrating every Christian church he met with, was marching on the hallowed sanctuary of the patron saint, enriched by the offerings of ages; without encountering a single foe who could even hope to stay his progress. Where was the "invincible" and ubiquitous Charles, who was wont to fall like a thunderbolt upon his enemies? We might indeed be surprised at his seeming tardiness, did we not know the extraordinary difficulties with which he had to struggle, and the seemingly impossible task he had to perform. It was not with the modern superstition of Mohammed alone that he had to contend, but with the hoary heathenism of the north; not with the Saracens alone, but with his barbarous kinsmen — with nations as hardy and warlike as his own Austrasian warriors, and animated no less than the followers of Mohammed with an indomitable hatred of the Christian name. Enemies were ready to pour upon him from every side, from the green slopes of the Pyrenees and over the broad waters of the Rhine; nor could he reckon upon the fidelity of all who lay within these boundaries.

During the whole of the ten years in which the Saracens were crossing the Pyrenees and establishing themselves in Gaul, Charles was constantly engaged in wars with his German neighbours. In that short period he made campaigns against the Frisians, the Swabians, and the Bavarians, the last of whom (as we have seen) he even crossed the Danube to attack in their own country. As late as 728 A.D., when Abderrahman must have been already meditating his desolating march, Charles had to turn his arms once more

[1 According to Strabo this town, called in Roman times Pompelo, derived its name from Pompey the Great, who rebuilt it in 68 B.C.]

against the Saxons; and in 731 A.D., the very year before he met the Saracens at Poitiers, he marched an army into Aquitaine to quell the rebellion of Duke Eudes.

Such were some of the adverse circumstances under which Charles had to make his preparations, and under which he encamped with his veterans in the neighbourhood of Poitiers, where, for the first time in his life, he beheld the white tents of the Moslem invaders, covering the land as far as the eye could reach.

We cannot doubt that he had long been looking forward to this hour with an anxious though intrepid heart, for all depended upon him; and that the wars in which he had lately been engaged, were the more important in his eyes, because their successful termination was necessary to secure his rear, and increase the limits of his war-ban when the time for action should arrive.

The hitherto unconquered Saracens, who had carried the banner of their prophet in almost uninterrupted triumph from the deserts of Arabia to the banks of the Loire, were destined to find at last an insuperable barrier in the brave hearts of Charles and his Austrasian followers.

On a Sunday, in the month of October, 732, after trying each other's strength in skirmishes of small importance during the whole of the previous week, the two armies, invoking respectively the aid of Christ and Mohammed, came to a general engagement on the plains between Poitiers and Tours. The rapid onslaught of the Ishmaelites, by which they were accustomed to bear everything before them, recoiled from the steady valour and iron front of the Franks, whose heavy swords made dreadful havoc among their lightly clad opponents. Repulsed, but unbroken in courage and determination, resolved to force their way through that wall of steel or to dash themselves to death against it, the gallant Moslems repeated their wild charges until sunset. At every repulse their blood flowed in torrents, and at the end of the day they found themselves farther than ever from the goal, and gazed upon far more dead upon the slippery field than remained alive in their ranks. Hopeless of being able to renew the contest, they retreated in the night, and, for the first time, fled before an enemy. On the following morning, when the Franks again drew up in battle-array, the camp of the foe was discovered to be empty, so that, instead of awaiting the attack, they had the more agreeable task of plundering the tents and pursuing the fugitives. Abderrahman himself was found among the dead, and around him, according to the not very credible account of the chroniclers,[p] lay three hundred thousand of his soldiers; while the Franks lost only fifteen hundred men.

Eudo, who after his defeat on the Dordogne had taken refuge with his more merciful enemy Charles, was present in the battle and took part in the pursuit and plunder. It was after this glorious triumph over the most formidable enemies of his country and religion that Charles received the surname of Martel (the hammer), by which he has since been known in history.

The importance of this victory to all succeeding ages has often been enlarged upon, and can hardly be exaggerated. The fate of Europe, humanly speaking, hung upon the sword of the Frankish mayor; and but for Charles, and the bold German warriors who had learned the art and practice of war under him and his glorious father, the heart of Europe might even now be in the possession of the Moslem; and the mosque and the harem might stand where now we see the spire of the Christian church, and the home of the Christian family.[q]

## CHAPTER IV

## CHARLES MARTEL TO CHARLEMAGNE

[732–768 A.D.]

THOUGH an effective check had been given to the progress of the Saracens' arms, and they themselves had been deprived of that chief support of fanatic valour, the belief in their own invincibility, yet their power was by no means broken, nor was Charles in a condition to improve his victory. The Neustrians and Burgundians were far from being reconciled to the supremacy which the German Franks had acquired over themselves under the mighty Carlovingian mayors. Their jealousy of Charles Martel's success and their hatred of his person, were so much stronger than their zeal in the cause of Christendom, that even while he was engaged in his desperate conflict with the Saracens, they were raising a rebellion in his rear. But the indefatigable warrior was not sleeping on the fresh laurels he had won. No sooner had he received intelligence of their treacherous designs, than he led his troops, fresh from the slaughter of the infidels, into the very heart of Burgundy, and inflicted a terrible retribution on his domestic foes. He then removed all whom he had reason to suspect from their posts of emolument and honour, and bestowed them upon men on whom he could depend in the hour of danger.

In the following year, 734 A.D., he made considerable progress in the subjugation and, what was even more difficult, the conversion of the Frisians, who hated Christianity the more because it was connected in their minds with a foreign yoke. The preaching of Boniface was powerfully seconded by the sword of Charles, who attacked them by land and sea, defeated their duke, Poppo, destroyed their heathen altars, and, like Alfred in the case of the Danes, gave them the alternative of Christianity or death.

After the victory of Poitiers, Charles had entrusted the defence of the Pyrenean borders to Duke Eudes, whom he left in peaceable though dependent possession of his territories. Eudes had received a rough lesson from his former misfortunes, and passed the remainder of his life in friendly relations with his Frankish liege lord. At the death of Eudes, in 735 A.D., a

dispute arose between his sons, Hunold and Hatto, respecting the succession; and it seems that in the course of their contest they had forgotten their common dependence upon Charles Martel. A feud of this nature at such a period, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Saracens, was highly dangerous to Aquitaine and the whole Frankish Empire. Charles therefore lost no time in leading an army into the distracted province, to settle the disputes of the contending parties, and bring the population into a more complete state of subjection. Having advanced to the Garonne and taken the city of Bordeaux, he entered into negotiations with Hunold; and, "with his accustomed piety,[e]" conferred the duchy upon him, on condition of his renewing his father's oath of fealty to himself and his two sons, whom he thus distinctly pointed out to the Franks as their hereditary rulers.

### THE SARACENS AGAIN REPELLED

In 737 A.D., the infidels were once more introduced into the south of Gaul by the treachery of Christians. A man of influence in Provence, called Maurontus, who probably aimed at an independent dukedom, formed a strong party among the Neustrian seigneurs against the detested German mayor. As the Arabian alliance was the only one which could sustain them in a conflict with Charles, they made no scruple of inviting Ibn Yusuf, the new viceroy of Septimania (Languedoc), into their country and giving him the city of Avignon as a pledge of their sincerity. The Saracens, instructed by their strange allies, passed into Burgundy, where the party opposed to Charles was strongest; having taken Vienne, they covered the country as far as Lyons with their wild and rapid cavalry, which everywhere left its traces of fire and blood.

The advance of the Saracens was so sudden, and their progress so rapid, that Charles Martel was not immediately prepared to meet them. He therefore despatched his brother Childebrand and his principal seigneurs, with such forces as were ready, to keep the enemy in check; determining himself to follow with a numerous and well-appointed army. When the advanced guard of the Franks arrived near Avignon, the Saracens retreated into that place, and prepared to stand a siege. On the arrival of Charles the town, which had resisted Childebrand, was taken by storm, and the Arabian garrison put to the sword. The Franks then crossed the Rhone, and marched through Septimania to Narbonne—a place of great importance to the Saracens, who had made it a magazine for their arms. It was defended at this time by Athima, viceroy of the caliph in Septimania, with a considerable force. The Saracens of Spain, fearing that the garrison might be insufficient to withstand the assault of the Franks (who had invested the town on every side), fitted out a fleet, and transported a body of troops to the mouth of the river Berre, near Narbonne, in hopes of raising the siege. This movement did not escape the quick eye of Charles; who, leaving his brother with a division of the besiegers, fell with the remainder on the newly landed force of the enemy, and routed them with dreadful slaughter. He failed, however, in his attempts upon Narbonne, which remained in the hands of the Saracens; while Bérziers, Agde, Megalone, and Nîmes, together with all the territory on the north side of the river Aude (subsequently known as Languedoc), were reunited to the Frankish Empire.

According to Paulus Diaconus,[f] Charles Martel was assisted on this occasion by Liutprand, king of the Lombards in Italy, with whom he had

[737–739 A.D.]

formed a close alliance and friendship. We have hardly sufficient grounds for believing that the Lombards took an active part in this war, but the mere expectation of their approach may have exercised some influence in bringing about the results above described.[1]

The activity of his enemies in the north again prevented Charles from pursuing his advantages against the Moslems, who might perhaps, had German Europe been united, have even then been driven back to the shores of Africa. In 737 we find the indefatigable warrior employed in repelling and avenging a fresh inroad of the Saxons, whom he defeated with great slaughter and drove along the river Lippe. In 739 he again appeared in Burgundy, where his presence had become necessary to stamp out the smouldering embers of the old conspiracy.

## THE AFFAIRS OF ROME

In the meantime a new theatre was preparing for the Franks, on which they were destined by Providence to play a very conspicuous and important part. The exertions and influence of Boniface, the great apostle of Germany, and the intimate religious union he had effected between the Frankish church and the bishops of Rome, were to produce for both parties still richer fruits than had yet appeared.

A FRANKISH OFFICER

The reunion of the Lombards under one head had been naturally followed as we have previously seen, by a further extension of their borders at the expense of the Roman Empire; and this extension was the immediate cause of a collision between the kings of the Lombards and the successors of St. Peter, which gave rise to the most important and lasting results.

The evident intention of the bishops of Rome, to play off the Lombards and the Byzantine court against each other, and to make their own career the resultant of these two opposing forces, seemed, for some time, likely to be entirely frustrated.

Liutprand, justly irritated by the conduct of the Romans, to whom he had shown so much forbearance, had led his forces to the very gates of Rome, with the full intention of incorporating it with the rest of his Italian dominions; and thus, with all his foresight, Gregory had brought the rising structure of the papacy into the greatest danger, and appeared to be himself at the mercy of his enemies.

In this extremity the holy father bethought himself of the powerful nation which had for so many ages been the faithful ally of the Catholic church, and had lately been united in still closer bonds of reverence and amity to

[1 Though Fredegarius[d] is silent on this point, Hodgkin[e] accepts it.]

St. Peter's chair. In 739 Pope Gregory III applied for aid against the Lombards "to his most excellent son, the sub-king Charles."

That this application was made unwillingly, and with considerable misgivings about the consequences, may be inferred from the extremities to which Gregory submitted before he made it.

His hesitation was owing, no doubt, in part to his instinctive dread of giving the papal chair a too powerful protector, who might easily become a master; and partly to his knowledge of the sincere friendship which existed between his opponent Liutprand and his desired ally. Of all the circumstances which threatened to prevent the realisation of the papal dreams of temporal independence and spiritual domination, none were so greatly and so justly dreaded as an alliance between the Franks and Lombards; and we shall see that Gregory III and his successors spared no pains, and shrank from no means however questionable, to excite jealousy and hatred between the Franks and their Lombard kinsmen.

### THE POPE CALLS TO CHARLES

While the Romans were trembling within their hastily repaired walls, and awaiting the decisive assault of the Lombards, Charles Martel was resting from the fatigues of his late campaigns in Burgundy; and he was still in that country when the papal envoys reached him. They brought with them a piteous epistle from Gregory, in which he complains with bitterness of the persecutions of his enemies, who, he says, had robbed the very church of St. Peter (which stood without the walls) of its candlesticks; and taken away the pious offerings of the Frankish princes. Charles received the communication of the afflicted pontiff with the greatest reverence. The interests of the empire, and more especially of his own family, were too intimately connected with the existence and honour of the bishops of Rome, to allow of his feeling indifferent to what was passing in Italy; and there is no reason to doubt that he entertained the highest veneration for the head of the church. Yet this first embassy seems to have justified the fears rather than the hopes of Gregory. The incessant exertions which Charles' enemies compelled him to make for the maintenance of his authority would long ago have destroyed a man of ordinary energy and endurance, and were beginning to tell even upon his iron frame. He was aware that the new order of things, of which he was the principal author, depended for its continuance and consolidation solely upon his presence and watchfulness. So far from being in a condition to lead his forces to a distant country, and to make enemies of brave and powerful friends, it was not long since he had sought the assistance of the Lombards themselves; and he knew not how soon he might stand in need of it again. He therefore contented himself with opening friendly negotiations with Liutprand, who excused himself to Charles, and agreed to spare the papal territory on condition that the Romans should cease to interfere between himself and his rebellious subjects. The exact terms of the agreement made between Gregory and Liutprand, by the mediation of Charles Martel, are of the less moment, as they were observed by neither party.

In 740 the Lombards again appeared in arms before the gates of Rome; and the pope was once more a suppliant at the Frankish court. In the letter which Charles Martel received on this occasion, Gregory bitterly complains that no effectual aid had been as yet afforded him; that more

[740–741 A.D.]

attention had been paid to the "lying" reports of the Lombard king than to his own statements, and he earnestly implores his "most Christian son" not to prefer the friendship of Liutprand to the love of the prince of the apostles. It is evident from the whole tenor of this second epistle, that the Frankish mayor had not altered his conduct towards the king of the Lombards, in consequence of Gregory's charges and complaints; but had trusted rather to his own knowledge of his friend than to the invectives of the terrified and angry pope.

To give additional weight to his written remonstrances and entreaties, Gregory sent the bishop Anastasius and the presbyter Sergius to Charles Martel, charged with more secret and important instructions, which he scrupled to commit to writing. The nature of their communications may be gathered from the symbolical actions by which they were accompanied. The envoys brought with them the keys of St. Peter's sepulchre, which they offered to Charles, on whom they were also empowered to confer the title and dignity of Roman patricius. By the former step — the offer of the keys (an honour never before conferred upon a Frankish ruler) — Gregory expressed his desire to constitute the powerful mayor protector of the holy see; and by conferring the rank of Roman patricius without, as seems probable, the sanction of the Greek emperor, he in effect withdrew his allegiance from the latter, and acknowledged Charles Martel as liege lord of the Roman duchy and people. It was in this light that the whole transaction was regarded at the time, for we read in the chronicle of Moissiac,[g] written in the beginning of the ninth century, that the letter of the pope was accompanied by "a decree of the Roman principes"; and that the Roman people, having thrown off the rule of the Greek emperor, desired to place themselves under the protection of the aforesaid prince, and his "invincible clemency."

Charles Martel received the ambassadors with the distinguished honour due to the dignity of the sender, and the importance of their mission; and willingly accepted at their hands the significant offerings they brought. When they were prepared to return, he loaded them with costly presents, and ordered Grimo, the abbot of Corbey, and Sigebert, a monk of St. Denis, to accompany them to Rome, and bear his answer to Pope Gregory. Rome was once more delivered from destruction by the intervention of Charles, and his influence with Liutprand.

And thus were the last days of the great Frankish hero and Gregory III employed in marking out a line of policy respecting each other, and the great temporal and spiritual interests committed to them, which, being zealously followed up by their successors, led in the sequel to the most important and brilliant results. They both died nearly at the same time, in the same year, 741 A.D., in which the events above described took place. The restless activity of Charles Martel had prematurely worn him out. Conscious of the rapid decline of his powers, he began to set his house in order; and he had scarcely time to portion out his vast empire among his sons, and to make his peace with heaven in the church of the patron saint, when he was seized by a fever in his palace at Cariciacum (Quierzy) on the Oise; where he died on the 15th (or 21st)[1] of October, 741 A.D., at the early age of fifty. He was buried in the church of Denis.

Charles Martel may be reckoned in the number of those great men who have been deprived of more than half the glory due to them, "because they want the sacred poet." Deeds which, in the full light of history, would

[1 Hodgkin says in one place the 21st; in another the 22nd of October.]

have appeared sufficient to make a dozen warriors immortal, are despatched by the Frankish chroniclers in a few dry words. His greatness, indeed, shines forth even from their meagre notices; but we feel, as we read them, that had a Cæsar or a Livy unfolded his character and described his exploits, —instead of a poor pedantic monk like Fredegarius,[d] a rival might be found for the Cæsars, the Scipios, and the Hannibals.

## CARLOMAN AND PEPIN THE SHORT

Charles Martel left two sons, Carloman and Pepin, by his first wife, of whom nothing is known, and a third, Grifo, by the captive Bavarian princess Swanahild, who is sometimes called his second wife and sometimes his concubine. In the first partition of his dominions, which was made known before his death, he apportioned Austrasia, Swabia (Alamannia), and Thuringia, the German provinces, to his eldest son, Carloman; Neustria, Burgundy, and Provence, to Pepin, the chief inheritor of his glory. In this arrangement the son of Swanahild was wisely passed over; but the entreaties of his beautiful spouse induced Charles, at the very end of his life, to set apart a portion from each of the two kingdoms above mentioned for Grifo; an unfortunate step, which only brought destruction on him who received the fatal gift.

The mischievous effects of the new partition showed themselves immediately. The subjects of Grifo, among whom alone he could look for sympathy and support, were discontented at being arbitrarily separated from the rest of the empire; and the ill-feeling of the seigneurs and people in all parts of the country appears to have been enhanced by the prejudice existing against Swanahild, both as a foreigner and on account of the great influence she exercised over the heart of Charles. So strong, indeed, was the feeling of the Franks upon the subject, that we may fairly doubt whether Carloman and Pepin themselves, had they been so inclined, would have been able to secure to their brother the possession of the territory allotted to him.

Whatever sentiments the two eldest brothers previously entertained towards Grifo, they were soon rendered openly hostile by the flight of their sister Hiltrude to the court of Bavaria, and her unauthorised marriage with Otilo, the duke of that country. Swanahild and Grifo, who were naturally looked upon as the instigators of this unwelcome alliance, shut themselves up in the fortress of Laon; but being entirely without resources, they yielded up the place and themselves as soon as Carloman and Pepin appeared with an army before its walls. The favourite wife of the mighty Charles Martel was sent into a nunnery at Chelles, and Grifo was imprisoned in the castle of Neufchâteau, in the forest of Ardennes.

Having placed a Merovingian named Childeric on the throne, — which their father for some time before his death had left unoccupied, — the young princes marched an army towards Aquitaine; for Hunold the son of Eudes, the sworn vassal of Charles Martel, had manifested his rebellious intentions by throwing Lantfred, the Frankish ambassador, into prison. Crossing the Loire, they devastated Aquitania as far as Bourges; and were on the point of overrunning the whole country, when the intelligence of the still more serious rebellion of the Swabians compelled them suddenly to break off their campaign in the south, and return to the heart of their dominions. Preparations of unusual magnitude had been made for the war by the dukes of Swabia and Bavaria, who had invited the Saxon and Slavonian tribes to

[742–745 A.D.]

make common cause against the Franks. The sudden return of the Frankish army, however, frustrated their half-completed plans. In the autumn of the same year, Carloman crossed the Rhine, fell upon the Swabian duke Theobald before his Bavarian allies were ready to take the field, and compelled him to renew his oath of allegiance, and to give hostages for its observance.

In the meantime, Otilo, duke of Bavaria, the husband of the fugitive princess Hiltrude, was doing all in his power to strengthen himself against the expected attack of the Franks, and was evidently acting in concert with Duke Hunold of Aquitaine. The defeat of the Swabians was a heavy blow to his hopes; but he had gone too far to recede, and having united a body of Saxons and Slavonian mercenaries with his own subjects, he took up a position on the farther side of the river Lech, and stockaded the banks to prevent the enemy from crossing. The Franks came up soon afterwards, but found the Bavarians so strongly entrenched, that they lay fifteen days on the opposite bank without attempting anything. After a diligent search, however, they discovered a ford by which they crossed the river during the night, and, falling on the unsuspecting enemy, put them to flight, and drove them with great slaughter across the river Inn.

The Frankish princes are said to have remained for fifty-two days in the enemies' country; but their expedition partook more of the nature of a foray than a conquest, and left the Bavarians in nearly the same condition of semi-independence in which it had found them. The activity of the revolted tribes rendered it dangerous for Carloman and Pepin to lead their forces too far in any one direction. As Hunold had been saved by the revolt of the Swabians, so Otilo was now relieved from the presence of the Franks by diversions made in his favour in two other quarters; by the Saxons, who had fallen upon Thuringia; and by Hunold, who, emboldened by impunity and the absence of the Franks, had crossed the Loire and was devastating the land as far as Chartres. The Saxons claimed the first attention of the Frankish leaders, since the latter dared not march towards the south with so dangerous an enemy in their rear. Carloman is said to have defeated the Saxon army, which consisted in all probability of undisciplined marauders, in two great battles, and to have carried off one of their leaders, named Theodoric, into Austrasia. Pepin was, in the meantime, engaged with the Swabians under Theobald, whom he soon reduced to obedience. Having thus, for the time, secured their rear, the brother-warriors marched (in 745 A.D.), with united forces, against Hunold,

CHILDERIC
(From a French print of 1832)

who, conscious of his utter inability to resist their undivided power, laid down his arms without a contest, consented to give hostages, and to renew his brittle oaths of fealty. Disgusted with his ill success, he soon afterwards resigned the government in favour of his son Waifar, and retired to the monastery of St. Philibert, in the island of Rhé, on the coast of Aquitaine.

Though it is not easy to discover in what respect the Swabians were more in fault in the war just mentioned than the other revolted nations, it is evident that they incurred the special resentment of their Frankish conquerors. All had broken their allegiance, and had sought to regain by force the independence of which they had been forcibly deprived. Yet while the Bavarians and Aquitanians were merely compelled to renew their engagements on honourable terms, the treatment of the Swabians has left an indelible blot on the character of Carloman.

This brave and once powerful people had retired, after their defeat by Pepin, into the fastnesses of the Alps, but were soon compelled to make their submission, and to resume their former allegiance. In 746, however, they appear to have meditated a new revolt, and were accused of having incited the Bavarians to try once more the fortune of war. Rendered furious by the seemingly interminable nature of the contest, Carloman appears to have thought himself justified in repaying faithlessness by treachery of a far more heinous nature; and this is the only shadow of an excuse which can be offered for his conduct. Having led his army to Cannstadt in 746, he ordered Theobald, the Swabian duke, to join him with all his forces, in obedience to the military ban. Theobald obeyed without suspicion, supposing that he should be employed, in conjunction with the rest of Carloman's forces, against some common enemy. "And there," says the chronicler of Metz,[c] "a great prodigy took place, that one army seized and bound another without any of the perils of war!" No sooner had the two armies met together in an apparently friendly manner, than Carloman ordered his Franks to surround the Alamanni (Swabians), and to disarm and bind them. He then instituted an inquiry respecting the aid afforded the Bavarians; and, having seized those chiefs who had assisted Otilo "against the invincible princes, Carloman and Pepin, he mercifully corrected each according to his deserts." Lanfried II received the vacant throne of Theobald, who, in all probability, was one of those who lost their lives by Carloman's merciful correction.

## PEPIN SOLE RULER

In the following year, the connection between the Carlovingian family and the Roman church, which had grown continually closer, was still farther strengthened by the voluntary abdication of Carloman, and his admission into the monastic order. The reasons which induced this mighty prince and successful warrior to take so singular a step are quite unknown. Remorse for his recent treachery, disgust at the bloodshed he had caused and witnessed, the sense of inferiority to his brother Pepin, and doubts as to the continuance of fraternal harmony, — a natural tendency to religious contemplation increased by the influence of Boniface, whose earnest faith and spotless life could not but make a deep impression upon all who knew him, — these and other causes will occur to the mind of everyone as being, singly or in different combinations, adequate to the result. Yet we can but guess at motives which were unknown to the generations immediately succeeding him, and which he himself perhaps would have found it difficult to define.

[747–748 A.D.]

With the full concurrence of his brother Pepin, whose appetite for worldly honours was by no means sated, Carloman set out for Rome[1] with a numerous retinue of the chief men in his kingdom, taking with him magnificent presents for the pope. He was received by Zacharias with great distinction; and by his advice Carloman vowed obedience to the rules of St. Benedict before Optatus, the abbot of Monte Casino, and founded a monastery to St. Silvester on the classic heights of Mount Soracte. But he was far too much in earnest in his desire of solitude to find the neighbourhood of Rome a suitable or agreeable residence. The newly founded monastery was soon thronged with curious visitors, eager to behold the princely monk who had given up all to follow Christ. He therefore abandoned Mount Soracte, and, concealing as far as possible his name and rank, enrolled himself among the Benedictine monks of Monte Cassino.

As no stipulation had been made in favour of Carloman's son Drogo, Pepin now became sole ruler of the whole Frankish Empire. It is a no less singular than pleasing fact that one of the very first uses which Pepin made of his undivided authority was to release his brother Grifo from his long imprisonment; singular, because it seems to imply that Carloman, whose susceptibility to religious influences cannot be doubted, was the only obstacle to this act of generosity and mercy. It is indeed open to us to suppose that Carloman foresaw more clearly than his brother the injurious consequences of Grifo's restoration to freedom; for the policy of this step was certainly more questionable than its generosity. The liberated prince thought more of what was withheld than of what was granted, and had never ceased to consider himself entitled to an equal share of the dominions of his father. In 748, not long after his release, while Pepin was holding a council of the bishops and seigneurs at Düren, Grifo was forming a party among the younger men to support his pretensions to the throne. In company with some of these he fled to the Saxons, who were always ready to make common cause against the hated Franks. Pepin, well aware of the extremely inflammable materials by which his frontiers were surrounded, and dreading a renewal of the conflagration he had so lately quenched in blood, immediately took the field; marching through Thuringia, he attacked and defeated the Nordo-Squavi, a Saxon tribe who lived on the river Wipper, between the Bode and Saale. The Saxon leader Theodoric was taken prisoner for the third time, and a considerable number of the captives taken on this occasion were compelled to receive Christian baptism, according to the usual policy of that age.

After fruitless negotiations between the brothers, Grifo endeavoured to make a stand at the river Oker; failing in this, he fled to the Bavarians, among whom an enemy of Pepin was sure to find a welcome. After devastating the Saxon territory for forty days, and reimposing the tribute formerly exacted by Clotaire, Pepin directed his march towards Bavaria, in pursuit of his brother. Otilo, the former duke of this country, was now dead, and had been succeeded by his son Tassilo, who ruled under the influence of the Frankish princess Hiltrude. These inveterate enemies of Pepin were also joined by a mighty Bavarian chief, called Suitger, and the Swabian duke, Lanfried II. If we understand rightly a passage in the annals of Metz, Grifo succeeded in depriving Tassilo and his mother of the reins of government and making himself master of Bavaria. Grifo, Suitger, and Lanfried united their forces, but not venturing to await the attack of the Franks

[1] The *Annales* of Einhard[b] make this in the year 745, but Hodgkin[c] says it clearly belongs to 746.]

upon the Lech, as Otilo had done on a former occasion, they retreated at once behind the Inn, which had already proved so effectual a bulwark. Pepin, however, no longer embarrassed by a variety of enemies, determined to bring the matter to a final decision, and was already making preparations to cross the Inn, when the leaders of the allied army, convinced of the futility of braving the superior force of the Franks, voluntarily surrendered themselves prisoners of war. The leniency with which the Bavarians were treated seems to imply that favourable terms of surrender had been granted, at any rate, to them. Tassilo received back his duchy, for which he had to swear fealty to the Frankish ruler; while Alamannia was finally incorporated with the Frankish dominions. The fate of Lanfried II, the last of the Swabian dukes, is not known; but the character and general policy of Pepin are a guarantee that he was not treated with unnecessary harshness. Grifo was once more indebted to his brother for life and liberty, and not only received full pardon, but was endowed with twelve counties and the town of Le Mans — a fortune splendid enough to have satisfied the desires of anyone who had not dreamed too much of independence and royal authority.

A MEROVINGIAN FRANK

The ill success which attended the efforts of Grifo, — whose claims but a few years before would have rallied thousands of malcontents round his standard, — and the rapid and easy suppression of the Swabian and Bavarian revolts, afford us evidence that the once bitter opposition of the seigneurs, both lay and clerical, to the establishment of the Carlovingian throne, was finally overcome; and that Pepin possessed a degree of settled authority which neither his father nor his grandfather had enjoyed.

### SECULARISATION

It was during the mayoralty of Pepin, and not, as is generally assumed, in that of Charles Martel, that the famous and important act of secularisation took place. The practice into which Charles Martel had been driven by his necessities, of bestowing ecclesiastical benefices on laymen who assumed the priesthood with purely secular views, was inconsistent with the peace and good order, and inimical to all the higher interests, of the Christian church. As an exceptional state of things, however, even rigid disciplinarians and pious churchmen like Boniface had thought it expedient to yield a tacit assent to the employment of church revenues for military purposes. But when, on the one hand, the consequences of these irregular and violent expedients had become, with the lapse of time, more clearly evident; and, on the other, a stricter discipline, and a more religious and ecclesiastical spirit had been diffused through the great body of the clergy by the labours of Boniface and his school, it became more and more repugnant to the feelings of all true friends of the church to see its highest offices filled

[751 A.D.]

by masquerading laymen, who had nothing of the priest about them but the name and dress. In this repugnance we have every reason to believe that both Carloman and Pepin largely shared; and yet, though not engaged in an internecine struggle like their father, they carried on expensive wars, and needed large supplies of land and money. It was not therefore to be expected that they should ease the church from all participation in the public burdens, especially at a time when it had absorbed a very large proportion of the national wealth. Under these circumstances, a compromise was effected by the influence of Boniface at the synod of Lestines. In this important council the assembled bishops consented, in consideration of the urgent necessities of the state, to make a voluntary surrender of a portion of the funds of the church; with the stipulation that the civil rulers should, on their part, abstain for the future from all arbitrary interference with its discipline and property.

The vast funds which the "secularisation" placed at the disposal of the Frankish princes contributed in no small degree to establish the Carlovingian throne; for it enabled them to carry out to its full extent the system of beneficial (or non-hereditary) grants, and to secure the services of the powerful seigneurs, who were bound to the sovereign not only by a sense of gratitude, but by the hope of future favours and the fear of deprivation.

### THE ANOINTING OF PEPIN (751 A.D.)

A change took place at the period at which we have now arrived, which, though easily and noiselessly made, and apparently but nominal, forms an important era in Frankish history. It costs us an effort to remember that Charles Martel, Carloman, and Pepin were not kings, but officers of another, who still bore the royal title, and occasionally and exclusively wore the crown and sat upon the throne. Carloman and Pepin, when they were heading great armies, receiving oaths of allegiance from conquered princes, and giving away duchies, were mayors of the palace of Childeric III, a Merovingian king. Even they had thought the time not yet come for calling themselves by their proper name, and had placed Childeric on the throne. The king's name was a tower of strength, which they who had met and defeated every other enemy seemed to shrink from attacking.

The foundations of the Merovingian throne, indeed, had been thoroughly, perhaps systematically, sapped. The king-making mayors had set up monarchs and deposed them at their pleasure; they had even left the throne vacant for a time, as if to prove whether the nation was yet cured of its inveterate notion that none but a Merovingian could wear a Frankish crown. There was but one step more to the throne, and that step was taken at last when there was scarcely a man in the empire who had either the power or the wish to prevent it.

In 751 A.D. Pepin assumed the name of king, with the full consent of the nation and the sanction of the pope; and the last of the Merovingians was shorn of his royal locks, the emblems of his power, and sent to end his days in the monastery of St. Bertin, at Sithieu (St. Omer in Artois).

The immediate motive for the change is not apparent, and the remarkable absence of all impatience on the part of Pepin to assume the royal name seems to justify the notion that the *coup-de-grâce* was given to the Merovingian dynasty by another hand than his. It might have been still deferred, but for the growing intimacy between the Carlovingians and the pope.

All that has been transmitted to us is the fact that, in 750 (or 751), an embassy, composed of Burchard, bishop of Würzberg, Fulrad, abbot of St. Denis, and Pepin's own chaplain, appeared at Rome at the papal court, and laid the following question before Pope Zacharias for his decision: Whether it was expedient that one who was possessed of no authority in the land should continue to retain the name of king, or whether it should be transferred to him who really exercised the royal power.

It is not to be imagined for a moment that Zacharias was unprepared with his reply to this momentous question, which would certainly not have been proposed had there been any doubt respecting the answer. The pope replied that, he who really governed should also bear the royal name; and the embassy returned to Pepin with this message, or, as some writers take a pleasure in calling it, this "command." A grand council of the nation was assembled at Soissons (Augusta Suessionum) in the same year, and the major-domus was unanimously elected sole king of the Franks, and soon afterwards anointed and crowned, with his wife Bertrada, by his old and faithful friend Boniface.

This solemn consecration by the use of holy oil, and other ceremonies, observed for the first time at the coronation of the Carlovingian king, were not without their important significance. The sentiment of legitimacy was very strongly seated in the hearts of the Frankish people. The dethroned family had exclusively supplied the nation with their rulers from all time; no one could trace their origin, or point to a Merovingian who was not either a king, or the kinsman of a king. It was far otherwise with Pepin. He was the first of his race who had not fought for the office of major-domus with competitors as noble as himself. It was little more than a century since his namesake of Landen had been dismissed from his office by the arbitrary will of Dagobert. The extraordinary fertility of the Carlovingian family in warriors and statesmen had hitherto enabled them to hold their own against all gainsayers. But if the new dynasty was to rest on something more certain and durable than the uninterrupted transmission of great bodily and mental powers in a single family, it was of vital importance to the Carlovingians to rear their throne upon foundations the depth of which was beyond the ken of vulgar eyes. Such a foundation could be nothing else than the sanction of heaven, and was to be sought in the Christian church, in the fiat of God's representative on earth, who could set apart the Carlovingians as a chosen race, and bestow upon them a heavenly claim to the obedience of their countrymen.

We have already referred to the successful efforts of Boniface and his followers in the cause of Roman supremacy. The belief in the power of the bishops of Rome, as successors of St. Peter, to bind and to loose, to set up and to set down, had already taken root in the popular mind, and rendered the sanction of the popes as efficacious a legitimiser as the cloud of mystery and fable which enveloped the origin of the fallen Merovingians.

So gradually was this change of dynasty effected, so skilfully was the new throne founded on well-consolidated authority, warlike renown, good government, and religious faith, that as far as we can learn from history, not a single voice was raised against the aspiring mayor, when his warriors, *more majorum*, raised him on the shield, and bore him thrice through the joyful throng; and when Boniface anointed him with holy oil, as king of the Franks "by the grace of God," not a single champion was found throughout that mighty empire, to draw his sword in the cause of the last monarch of the house of Clovis.

[744–751 A.D.]

Pepin was not long allowed to enjoy his new dignity in peace, but was quickly called upon to exchange the amenities of the royal palace for the toils and dangers of the battle-field.

The Saxons had already recovered from, and were desirous of avenging, the chastisement inflicted upon them; and having rebelled "in their way," [as Fredegarius[d] says] were now marching upon the Rhine. But Pepin, who had not ceased to be a general when he became a king, collected a large army, with which he crossed the Rhine, and entering the territory of the Saxons, wasted it with fire and sword, and carried back a large number of captives into his own dominions.

It was on his return from this campaign that he received the news of his brother Grifo's death. This restless and unhappy prince — whom the indelible notion of his right to a throne rendered incapable of enjoying the noble fortune allotted to him by his brother — had fled to Waifar, duke of Gascony, in the hope of inducing him to take up arms. But Waifar was not in a condition to protect him; and when the ambassadors of Pepin demanded that he should be given up, Grifo was obliged to seek another asylum. The fugitive then directed his course to King Aistulf, foreseeing, probably, that Pepin would be drawn into the feud between the pope and the Lombards, the subjects of Aistulf, and therefore thinking that he might already regard the latter as the enemy of his brother. As he was passing the Alps, however, with a small retinue, he was set upon, in the valley of St. Jean de Maurienne, by Count Theudes of Vienne and the Transjuran Count Friedrich. Grifo was slain, but not until after a desperate struggle, in which both the counts above mentioned also lost their lives.

Pepin now retired to his royal residence at Dietenhoven (Thionville, Villa Theudonis), on the Moselle, and spent the few months of peace that followed the Saxon war in ordering the affairs of the church, which he effected chiefly through the instrumentality of ecclesiastical synods.[b]

We may now profitably revert briefly to the affairs of the Lombards whom we left just at the moment of Liutprand's death in 744.[a]

### LOMBARD AFFAIRS

The influence of Charles Martel with his ally and friend Liutprand, and the reverence which the latter entertained for the popes in their spiritual character, had caused a temporary lull in the affairs of Italy. But Liutprand died about two years after the accession of Pepin, and was succeeded, first by his grandson Hildebrand, who reigned seven months, and then by Ratchis, duke of Friuli, under whom the Lombards renewed the war against Rome. In this emergency, Zacharias, who, like many other popes, trusted greatly and with good reason to his personal influence over the rude kings and warriors of the age, went himself to Perugia (Perusia) to beg a peace from Ratchis. The result was favourable to a degree beyond his highest expectations. The Lombard monarch not only recalled his troops — which were already besieging the towns of the Pentapolis — and granted a peace of forty years, but was so deeply affected by the dignified demeanour and eloquent exhortations of the holy father, that, like another Carloman, he renounced his earthly crown, and sought a refuge from the cares of government in the quiet cloisters of Monte Cassino.[b]

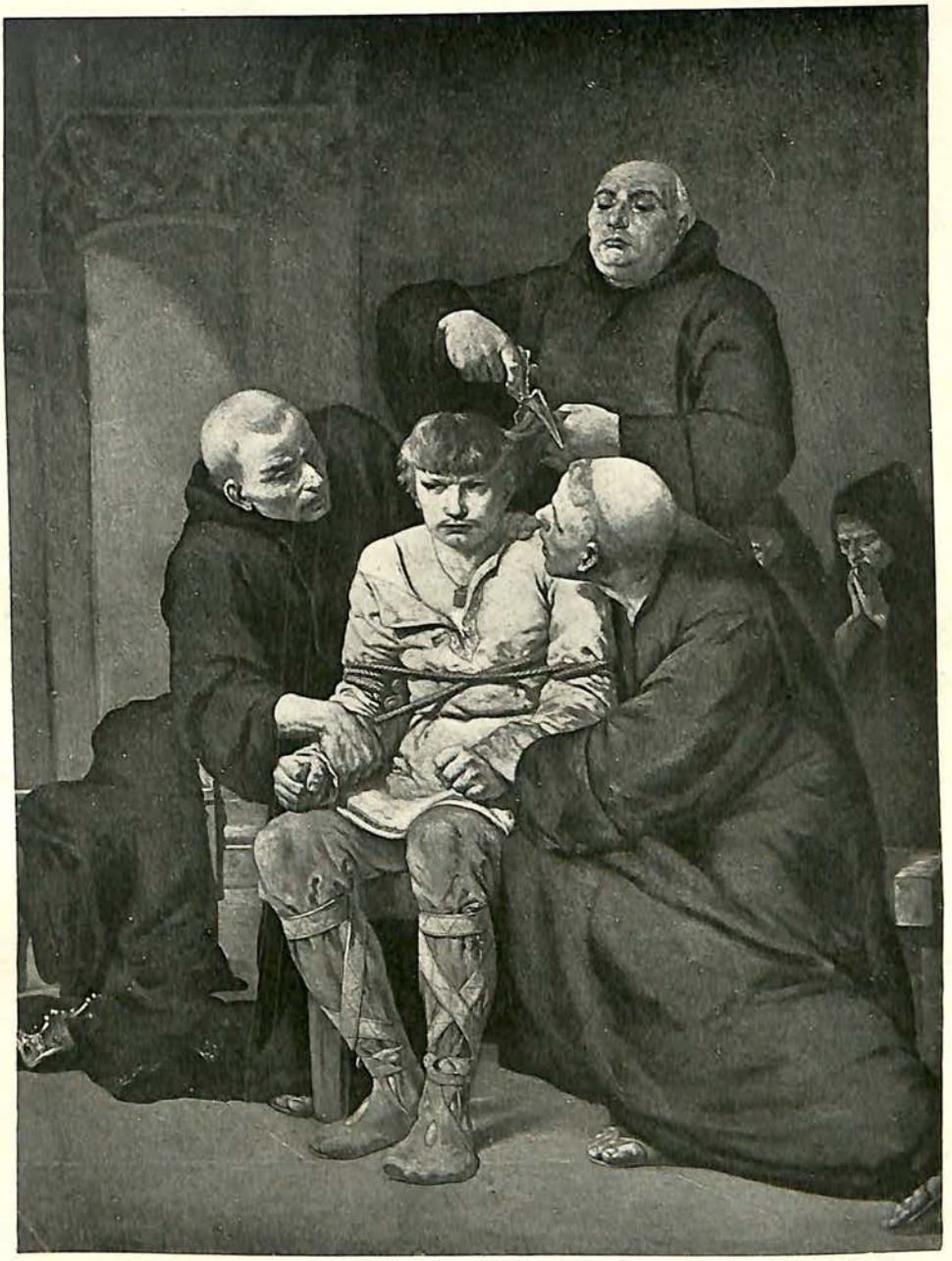
This is the story as told in the *Liber Pontificalis*,[i] but there are reasons for thinking that Ratchis lost the favour of his own Lombards by winning the

smile of the pope, and that a revolution unseated him and he was fortunate enough to be immured in a convent instead of meeting the probable fate of his predecessor, Hildebrand, whose disappearance is unexplained. It is a strange fact that Ratchis went to the same convent where the ex-king Carloman lived.[a]

Ratchis was succeeded in 749 by his brother Aistulf, a man by no means so sensible to spiritual influences, and remarkable for his energy and strength of purpose. In three years from his accession to the Lombard throne, he succeeded in driving out Eutychius, the last exarch of the Greek emperors, from the exarchate of Ravenna, and made himself master of the city. Having thus secured the possession of the southern portion of the Roman territory, he marched upon Rome itself; and when Pope Zacharias died, March 15th, 752, it must have been with the melancholy conviction that all his efforts to preserve the independence of Rome, and to further the lofty claims of the papacy, were about to prove fruitless. Once more was Hannibal at the gates; but, fortunately for the interest of the threatened city, the successor of Zacharias, Stephen II, was a man in every way equal to the situation. By a well-timed embassy and costly presents, he stayed the uplifted arm of the Lombard for the moment, and, as often happens in human affairs, by gaining time he gained everything.

After remaining quiet for a few months, Aistulf again resumed his threatening attitude towards the Romans, and demanded a palpable proof of their subjection to himself, in the shape of a poll-tax of a gold solidus per head. A fresh embassy from the pope, which the Lombard king received at Nepi (near Sutri, north of Rome), met with no success, and the holy abbots of St. Vincent and St. Benedict, who composed it, returned to their monasteries in despair. Nor was any greater effect produced by the arrival of Joannes, the imperial *Silentiarius*, who was sent by the Greek emperor from Constantinople. This pompous messenger brought letters for the pope and King Aistulf, in which the latter was called upon to desist from his present undertaking and to restore the whole of the territory of which he had unjustly robbed the Grecian Empire. The high-sounding language and haughty requirements of the Byzantines, unsupported as they were by any material power, could make no impression upon such a man as Aistulf, and he dismissed the imperial envoy with an unmeaning answer.

The danger of Rome had now reached its highest point, and no deliverance seemed nigh. "King Aistulf," in the language of the papal biographer,[i] "was inflamed with rage, and, like a roaring lion, never ceased to utter the most dreadful threats against the Romans, declaring that he would slay them all with the sword, if they did not submit themselves to his rule." An appeal which the pope had made to the Byzantine emperors for protection was entirely fruitless, and the Romans were utterly unequal to sustain unaided a contest with the warlike Lombards. It was in this extremity that Stephen determined to test once more the value of that close relation which it had been the object of so many popes to form with the Frankish people, and more especially with the Carlovingian family. He knew that it would be no easy matter to induce King Pepin or his Franks to undertake an expedition into Italy with a force sufficient for the object in view. He felt, too, that a mere letter from Pepin, such as Charles Martel had sent to his good friend Liutprand, would be of no avail to turn the ambitious Aistulf from his purpose. He therefore adopted the resolution of crossing the Alps, throwing himself at the feet of the Frankish monarch and thus giving him a convincing proof that the very existence of the papacy was at stake.



THE LAST MEROVINGIAN KING: CHILDERIC THE STUPID

(From the painting by Luminais)

[753-754 A.D.]

THE POPE VISITS PEPIN

With this view the holy father, seeing that all his entreaties "for the fold which had been entrusted to him (Rome), and the lost sheep" (Istria and the exarchate of Ravenna), were fruitless, started from Rome on the 14th of October, 753, in company with the abbot Droctigang and Duke Autchar, whom Pepin had previously sent to Stephen with general promises of support. He was also followed by a considerable number of the Roman clergy and nobility. On his journey northwards he passed through the city of Pavia, where Aistulf then was; and though the latter had forbidden him to say a word about restoration of territory, he once more endeavoured, by rich presents and earnest entreaties, to induce the king to give up his conquests and forego his hostile purposes. He was warmly seconded by Pepin's envoys, and another epistle from the Greek emperor; but the mind of the fierce Lombard remained unchanged. It is evident, indeed, that he would have prevented Stephen by force from continuing his journey but for the threats of the Frankish ambassadors. As it was he endeavoured to intimidate the pope in the presence of Droctigang into a denial of his wish to proceed to the court of Pepin; and only then dismissed him when he saw that Stephen would yield to nothing but actual violence.

PEPIN

(From a French print of 1880)

Pepin was still at his palace at Dietenhofen, when the intelligence reached him that the pope, with a splendid retinue, had passed the Great St. Bernard, and was hastening, according to agreement, to the monastery of St. Maurice at Agaunum. It had been expected that the king himself would be there to receive the illustrious fugitive; but Stephen on his arrival found in his stead the abbot Fulrad and the duke Rothard, who received the holy father with every mark of joy and reverence, and conducted him to the palace of Ponthion, near Châlons, where he arrived on the 6th of January, 754. As a still further mark of veneration, the young prince Charles was sent forward to welcome Stephen at a distance of about seventy miles from Ponthion;[1] and Pepin himself is said to have gone out three miles on foot to meet him, and to have acted as his marshal, walking by the side of his palfrey. The extraordinary honours paid by Pepin to the aged exile proceeded partly, no doubt, from the reverence and sympathy which his character and circumstances called forth. But his conduct might also result from a wise regard to his own interests, and a desire of inspiring his subjects with a mysterious awe for the spiritual potentate at whose behest he had himself assumed the crown.

[1 "A meeting full of interest," as Hodgkin notes, for the fourteen-year-old prince was the future Charlemagne.]

The decisive conference between Pepin and Stephen took place at Ponthion on the 16th of January. The pope appeared before the Frankish monarch in the garb and posture of a suppliant, and received a promise of protection, and the restoration of all the territory of which the Lombards deprived him.

The winter, during which no military operations could be undertaken, was spent by Stephen at the monastery of St. Denis at Paris. The spectacle of the harmony and friendship subsisting between the Roman pontiff and King Pepin was calculated to produce a good effect on the Romance subjects of the latter; who, on account of his German origin and tendencies, was regarded with less attachment in Neustria and Burgundy than in his Austrasian dominions.

This effect was increased by Stephen's celebrating in person that solemn act of consecration which he had already performed by proxy. At the second coronation of Pepin, which took place with great solemnity and pomp in the church of St. Denis on the 28th of July, 754, his queen, Bertrada, and her two sons, Charles and Carloman, were also anointed with the holy oil, and the two last were declared the rightful heirs of their father's empire. That nothing might be wanting on the part of the church to set apart the Carlovingian family as the chosen of God, Stephen laid a solemn obligation on the Franks, that "throughout all future ages neither they nor their posterity should ever presume to appoint a king over themselves from any other family."

The title of *Patricius Romanorum*, which had first been worn by Clovis, was bestowed by the pope upon the king and his sons. It is difficult to understand how this dignity could at this period be imparted to any one without the authority of the Byzantine emperor. Constantine (nicknamed Copronymus) may indeed have taken the opportunity of the pope's journey to offer the patriciate to Pepin; but it is more consistent with the circumstances we have described to suppose that Stephen was acting irregularly and without authority in conferring a Roman title on the Frankish king; and that he intended at the same time to give a palpable proof of his independence of the emperor who had neglected to aid him, and to point out Pepin as his future ally and protector.

On the 1st of March, 755,[1] Pepin summoned his council of state at Bernacum (Braine), where the war against the Lombards was agreed to, provided no other means could be found to reinstate the pope. In the meantime ambassadors were despatched to Aistulf, with terms which show that the Franks were by no means eager for the expedition. King Pepin on this occasion styles himself "defender of the holy Roman church by divine appointment," and demands that the territories and towns should be restored — not to the Byzantine emperor, to whom they at any rate nominally belonged, but "to the blessed St. Peter and the church and commonwealth of the Romans."

It is at this crisis of affairs that Carloman, the brother of Pepin, once more appears upon the stage, and in a singular character, viz., as opponent of the pope. Aistulf, by what influence we are not informed, prevailed upon him to make a journey to the Frankish court, for the purpose of counteracting the effect of Stephen's representations. He met of course with no success, and was sent by Pepin and Stephen into a monastery at Vienne, where he died in the same year.

[1 Oelsner[k] and others advocate 754 as the date of Pepin's first Italian campaign, but Abel,[l] Perry,[b] and Hodgkin[e] agree upon 755.]

[755 A.D.]

### PEPIN INVADES ITALY (755 A.D.)

Aistulf on his part was equally determined, and war became inevitable. He would make no promise concerning the conquered territory, but would grant a safe conduct to Stephen back to his own diocese. The lateness of the season allowed of no lengthened negotiations. Immediately after the receipt of Aistulf's answer Pepin began his march towards Italy, accompanied by Stephen; and having sent forward a detachment to occupy the passes of the Alps, he followed it with the whole force of the empire. Passing through Lyons and Vienne, he made his way to Maurienne, with the intention of crossing the Alps by the valley of Susa, at the foot of Mont Cenis. This important pass, however, had been occupied by Aistulf, who had pitched his camp there and was prepared to dispute the passage. According to the chroniclers, he endeavoured to strengthen his position by the same warlike machines which he had "wickedly designed for the destruction of the Roman state and the apostolic chair." The onward march of the Franks was effectually checked for the moment.

Pepin pitched his camp on the river Arc. In a short time, however, a few of his more adventurous soldiers made their way through the mountains into the valley of Susa, where Aistulf lay. Their inferior numbers emboldened the Lombards, who immediately attacked them. "The Franks," says Fredegarius,[d] "seeing that their own strength and resources could not save them, invoked the aid of God and the holy apostle Peter; whereupon the engagement began, and both sides fought bravely. But when King Aistulf beheld the loss which his men were suffering, he betook himself to flight, after having lost nearly the whole of his army, with the dukes, counts, and chief men of the Lombards." The main body of Pepin's army then passed the Alps without resistance, and spread themselves over the plains of Italy as far as Pavia, in which the Lombard king had taken refuge.

The terrible ravages of the invaders, who plundered and burned all the towns and villages which lay along their route, and the imminent danger which threatened himself and his royal city subdued for the moment the stubborn spirit of Aistulf, and he earnestly besought the Frankish prelates and nobles to intercede for him with their "merciful" sovereign. He promised to restore Ravenna and all the other towns which he had taken "from the holy see," to keep faithfully to his allegiance to Pepin, and never again to inflict any injury on the apostolic chair or the Roman state. The pope himself, who had no desire to see the Franks too powerful in Italy, earnestly begged his mighty protector "to shed no more Christian blood, but to put an end to the strife by peaceful means." Pepin was by no means sorry to be spared the siege of Pavia, and having received forty hostages and caused Aistulf to ratify his promises by the most solemn oaths, he sent the pope with a splendid retinue to Rome, and led his army homewards laden with booty.

### SECOND WAR WITH THE LOMBARDS

But Aistulf was not the man to sit down quietly under a defeat, or to forego a long-cherished purpose. In the following year he renewed the attack upon the Roman territory with a fury heightened by the desire of vengeance. Rome itself was besieged, and the church of St. Peter on the

Vatican sacrilegiously defiled. Pope Stephen II,[n] from whose life and letters we gain our knowledge of these circumstances, repeatedly wrote to Pepin and his sons for aid, in the most urgent and at times indignant terms. In one of his epistles, St. Peter himself is made to address them as "his adopted sons," and to chide the delay and indecision of the king. After assuring them that not he (the apostle) only, but the "mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary," and "thrones and dominions, and the whole army of heaven, and the martyrs and confessors of Christ, and all who are pleasing to God," earnestly sought and conjured them to save the holy see, the apostle promises, in case of their compliance, that he will prepare for them "the highest and most glorious tabernacles" and bestow on them "the rewards of eternal recompense and the infinite joys of paradise." "But if," he adds, "which we do not expect, you should make any delay, know that, for your neglect of my exhortation, you are alienated from the kingdom of God and from eternal life." When speaking in his own person Stephen says, "Know that the apostle Peter holds firmly in his hand the deed of gift which was granted by your hands." Nor does he neglect to remind the Frankish princes of their obligation to the papacy and the return that they were expected to make. "Therefore," he says, "has the Lord, at the intercession of the apostle Peter and by means of our lowliness, consecrated you as kings, that through you the holy church might be exalted and the prince of the apostles regain his lawful possessions."

The boundless promises and awful denunciations of the pope might have been alike unavailing, had not other and stronger motives inclined the king to make a second expedition into Italy. The interests of his dynasty were so closely connected with those of the Roman church, that he could not desert the pope in this imminent peril without weakening the foundations of his throne; and his honour as a warrior and a king seemed to require that the Lombards should be punished for their breach of faith. The influence of Boniface, too (who was still alive, though he died before the end of the campaign), was no doubt exerted in behalf of the papacy which he had done so much to raise. Pepin determined to save the pope, but he did so at the imminent risk of causing a revolt among his own vassals, who openly and loudly expressed their disapproval of the war. "This war" (against the Lombards), says Einhard,[m] "was undertaken with the greatest difficulty, for some of the chief men of the Franks with whom he (Pepin) was accustomed to take counsel were so strongly opposed to his wishes that they openly declared that they would desert the king and return home."

Pepin found means to pacify or overawe these turbulent dissentients, and persisted in his determination again to save the head of the church from his enemies.

In this second Italian expedition Pepin was accompanied by his nephew Tassilo, who, in obedience to the war-ban of his liege lord, joined him with the Bavarian troops. The Frankish army marched through Châlons and Geneva to the same valley of Maurienne and to the passes of Mont Cenis, which, as in the former year, were occupied by the troops of Aistulf. The Franks, however, in spite of all resistance, made their way into Italy, and took a fearful vengeance for the broken treaty, destroying and burning everything within their reach, and giving no quarter to their perfidious enemies. They then closely invested Pavia; and Aistulf, convinced of his utter inability to cope with Pepin, again employed the willing services of the Frankish seigneurs to negotiate a peace. Pepin on his side accepted the overtures made to him with singular facility, but obliged Aistulf to give

[756 A.D.]

fresh hostages, to renew his oaths, and, what was more to the purpose, to deliver up a third of the royal treasure in the city of Pavia.[1] Aistulf also agreed to renew an annual tribute, which is said to have been paid for a long time previously to the Frankish monarchs.

And thus a second time was the papacy delivered from a danger which went nigh to nip its budding greatness, and reduce it to the rank of a Lombard bishopric.

Aistulf died while hunting in a forest (probably in December, 756) before he had had time to forget the rough lessons he had received and to recover from his losses in blood and treasure.

A danger from another quarter, which threatened the development of the papal power, was also warded off by the power and steadfastness of Pepin. When the exarchate of Ravenna was overrun by the Lombards, it was taken, not from the pope, but from the Greek emperor; and even the towns and territories which were virtually under the sway of the papal chair, were, nominally at least, portions of the Eastern Roman Empire. As Stephen had never formally renounced his allegiance to the emperor, he could receive even the Roman duchy only as a representative of his sovereign, and to the other remains of the Roman Empire in Italy he had no claim whatever. The Lombards had dispossessed the Greeks, and the Franks had expelled the Lombards. It was therefore open to the conqueror to bestow his new acquisition where he pleased; but, at all events, the claim of the Greek emperor was stronger than that of his vassal the bishop of Rome. We cannot wonder, then, when we read that ambassadors from Constantinople came to meet Pepin in the neighbourhood of Pavia, and begged him to restore Ravenna and the other towns of the exarchate to the Roman emperor. "But they did not succeed," says the chronicler,*j* "in moving the steadfast heart of the king; on the contrary, he declared that he would by no means allow these towns to be alienated from the rule of the Roman chair, and that nothing should turn him from his resolution." Accordingly, he despatched the abbot Fulrad, with the plenipotentiary of King Aistulf, to receive possession of the towns and strong places which the Lombard had agreed to resign. The abbot was further instructed to take with him a deputation of the most respectable inhabitants from these towns, and in their company to carry the keys of their gates to Rome, and lay them in St. Peter's grave, together with a regular deed of gift to the pope and his successors.

The independence of the holy see, as far as regarded the Greek Empire, was thus secured, and a solid foundation laid for the temporal power of the popes, who may now be said to have taken their place for the first time among the sovereigns of Europe. [The growth of this power will be more fully treated in volume under the Papacy.]

### DESIDERIUS MADE LOMBARD KING

The rising fortunes of the Roman pontiffs were still further favoured by a disputed succession to the Lombard throne. On the death of Aistulf, his brother Ratchis, who had formerly changed a crown for a cowl, was desirous of returning to his previous dignity, and appears to have been the popular candidate. Desiderius, duke of Tuscia (Tuscany), constable of Aistulf,

[1 This statement in the *Annales Mettenses*c alone is somewhat doubtful.]

obtained the support of the pope. In order to secure this valuable alliance, he had promised "to comply with all the holy father's wishes," to deliver up other towns in Italy besides those mentioned in Pepin's deed of gift, and to make him many other rich presents. "Upon this," says the chronicler, "the arch-shepherd took counsel with the venerable abbot Fulrad, and sent his brothers, Diaconus Paulus and Primicerius Christopher, in company with Abbot Fulrad, to Desiderius, in Tuscia (Tuscany), who immediately confirmed his former promises with a deed and a most fearful oath."

After this prudent precaution, it was agreed at Rome that the cause of Desiderius should be supported, even by force of arms if necessary, against Ratchis. "But Almighty God ordered matters in such a manner that Desiderius, with the aid of the pope, ascended the throne without any further contest." The promised towns, Faventia (Faenza), with the fortresses Tiberiacum, Cavellum, and the whole duchy of Ferrara, were claimed, and, according to some accounts, received, by the papal envoys; though the next pope complains that Desiderius had not kept his promises. Stephen II ended his eventful life on the 24th of April, 757 A.D.

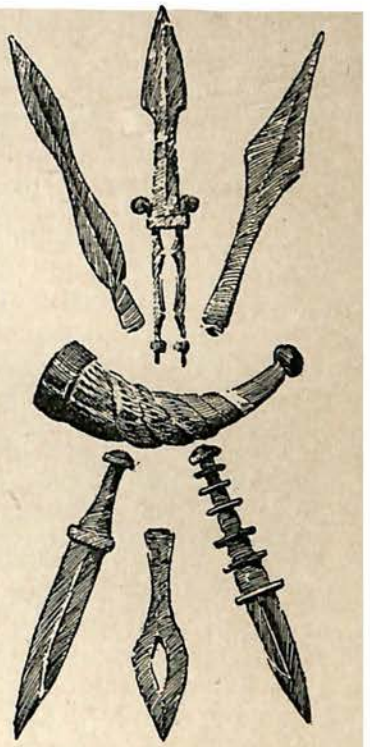
### PEPIN AND THE AQUITANIANS

With the exception of an unimportant expedition against the Saxons, in which Pepin gained a victory on the river Lippe, and again at Sithieu, near Dülmen on the Stever (in Westphalia), nothing of importance, in a military point of view, appears to have been undertaken before 760; when, according to some authors, Narbonne was taken from the Saracens, who were now driven from all their possessions on the Gallic side of the Pyrenees.

In 760, began a long series of annual expeditions against Aquitaine, a country which had asserted a degree of independence highly offensive to the Franks. The Aquitanian princes, too, are supposed to have been peculiarly odious to Pepin, as offshoots from the Merovingian stock. Waifar, the reigning duke, the son of that Hunold who had retired from the world in disgust after his defeat by the Franks, inherited the restless and haughty spirit of his father, and was ready to renew the contest which Hunold had abandoned in despair. The ambitious desires of Pepin, quickened by a personal dislike of Waifar, were seconded by a strong mutual antipathy existing between his own subjects and the Aquitanians. German blood did not enter largely into the composition of the population of Aquitaine, and that small portion which did flow in their veins was supplied by the Ostrogoths, a German tribe, indeed, but one which differed very widely from their Frankish kinsmen. The Aquitanians appear at this time to have possessed a degree of civilisation unknown to the Franks, whom they regarded as semi-barbarians; while the Franks, in turn, despised the delicacy and refinement of their weaker neighbours. Their mutual dislikes and jealousies were kept alive by a perpetual border warfare, which was carried on (as formerly between England and her neighbours on the north and west) by powerful individuals in either country, without regard to the relations existing between their respective rulers. It was from these causes that Pepin came to look upon the Aquitanians and their duke in the same light as the Welsh were regarded by Edward I. The affected independence of Waifar, and the continual inroads made by the Aquitanians into his dominions, exasperated his feelings in the highest degree; and he evidently sought the quarrel which occupied him for the remainder of his life.

[760-766 A.D.]

In 760, Pepin sent an embassy to Waifar, with demands which betrayed his hostile intentions against that unfortunate prince. On this occasion, too, the Frankish monarch came forward as a protector of the church. He demanded of Waifar that he should give up all the ecclesiastical property in his dominions which had been in any way alienated from the church; restore the immunities which the lands of the clergy had formerly enjoyed; and cease for the future from sending into them his officers and tax-gatherers. Furthermore, he demanded that Waifar should pay a wergild "for all the Goths whom he had lately put to death contrary to law;" and, lastly, that he should deliver up all fugitives from the dominions of Pepin who had sought refuge in Aquitaine.



FRANKISH WEAPONS

Waifar had thus the option given him of submitting to become a mere lieutenant of Pepin, or of having the whole force of the Frankish Empire employed for his destruction. He chose the latter alternative, as every high-spirited prince must have done under the circumstances; and the war began at once. "All this," says Fredegarius,[h] "Waifar refused to do; and therefore Pepin collected an army from all quarters, although unwillingly, and, as it were, under compulsion." The Frankish army marched through Troyes and Auxerre, and, crossing the Loire at the village of Masua, and passing through Berri and Auvergne, devastated the greater part of Aquitaine with fire and sword.

In the following year Waifar, who had formed an alliance with Hunibert, count of Bourges, and Blandin, count of Auvergne, considered himself strong enough to venture upon an inroad into the Frankish territory; and, in company with these allies, he led his army, plundering and burning, as far as Châlons on the Saône. Pepin's rage at hearing that the Aquitanians had dared to take the initiative, and had ravaged a large portion of Neustria, and even burned his own palace at Melciacum, was further increased by the knowledge that some of his own counts were aiding the invaders. Hastily collecting his troops, he took a terrible revenge, and showed the unusual exasperation of his feelings by putting his prisoners to death, and allowing a great number of men, women, and children to perish in the flames of the conquered towns.

The campaign of 763 is remarkable for the sudden defection of Tassilo, duke of Bavaria and nephew of Pepin, who, during the march towards Aquitaine, suddenly withdrew with his troops under pretence of illness, with the firm resolve "never to see his uncle's face again." When about twenty-one years of age, Tassilo had been compelled to swear fealty to Pepin at the Campus Maius held at Compiègne in 757. Since that period he had been kept continually near his uncle's person, as if the latter was not satisfied with the sincerity of his subservience. The defection of Tassilo, at a time when the Frankish power was engaged in this desperate and bitter contest with the Aquitanians, caused great anxiety to Pepin.

Waifar and his people were by 766 utterly exhausted by their exertions and calamities, and, being without the means of continuing the war, lay at

the mercy of the conquerors. That unhappy prince himself, deserted by the great mass of the Gascons, and hunted from hiding-place to hiding-place like a wild beast, met with the common fate of unfortunate monarchs; he was betrayed and murdered by his own followers in the forest of Edobold in Périgord. The independence of Aquitaine fell with him, and the country was subsequently governed by Frankish counts like the rest of Pepin's empire.

The victor returned in triumph to his queen Bertrada (who was awaiting him at Saintes), rejoicing, doubtless, in having at last attained the object of so many toilsome years. His implacable and hated foe was no more; the stiff-necked Aquitanians were at his feet; his southern border was secure; and the whole empire was in an unwonted state of peace. He had every reason to look forward with confidence to an interval at least of quiet, which he might spend in domestic pleasures and in the regulation of the internal affairs of the vast empire over which he ruled.

But where he had looked for repose and safety an enemy awaited him more terrible than any whom he had encountered in the field. A short time after he arrived at Saintes, he was attacked by a disease which is variously described as fever and dropsy. Convinced that his case was beyond all human aid, he set out with his wife and children to Tours, and, entering the church of St. Martin, earnestly prayed for the intercession of that patron saint of the Frankish kings. From thence he proceeded to Paris, and passed some time in the monastery of St. Denis, invoking the aid of God through his chosen servants. But when he saw that it was the will of heaven that he should die, he provided for the future welfare of his subjects; summoning the dukes and counts, the bishops and clergy of his Frankish dominions, he divided the whole empire, with their concurrence, between his two sons, Charles and Carloman. He died a few days after the settlement of the discussion, on the 24th of September, 768, in the twenty-first year of his prosperous reign, and was buried by his sons, with great pomp, in the church of St. Denis, at Paris.

Pepin was described by Alcuin, in the following generation, as an "energetic and honourable" prince, "distinguished alike by his victories and his virtues"; and although such epithets were used, more especially in that age, without sufficient discrimination, there is every reason in the present case to adopt them in their full significance. In the field, indeed, he had fewer difficulties to deal with than his warlike father. In all his military undertakings the odds were greatly in his favour; and he had not the same opportunities as Charles Martel of showing what he could effect by the mere force of superior genius. Yet, whatever he was called upon to do, he did with energy and success. He quickly brought the revolted German nations, the Bavarians and Swabians, to the obedience to which the hammering of his predecessor had reduced them; and he drove back the restless Saxons to their wild retreats. Twice he led an army across the Alps against a brave and active enemy, and twice returned victorious, after saving the distant city of Rome from imminent destruction and securing the independence of the pope.

As a civil ruler he showed himself temperate and wise. Though greatly superior in every respect to his brother, he took no unfair advantage of him, but lived and acted with him in uninterrupted harmony. Though his ambition induced him to assume the name of king, he did so without haste or rashness, at a time and under circumstances in which the change of dynasty was likely to cause the least amount of ill-feeling or disturbance.

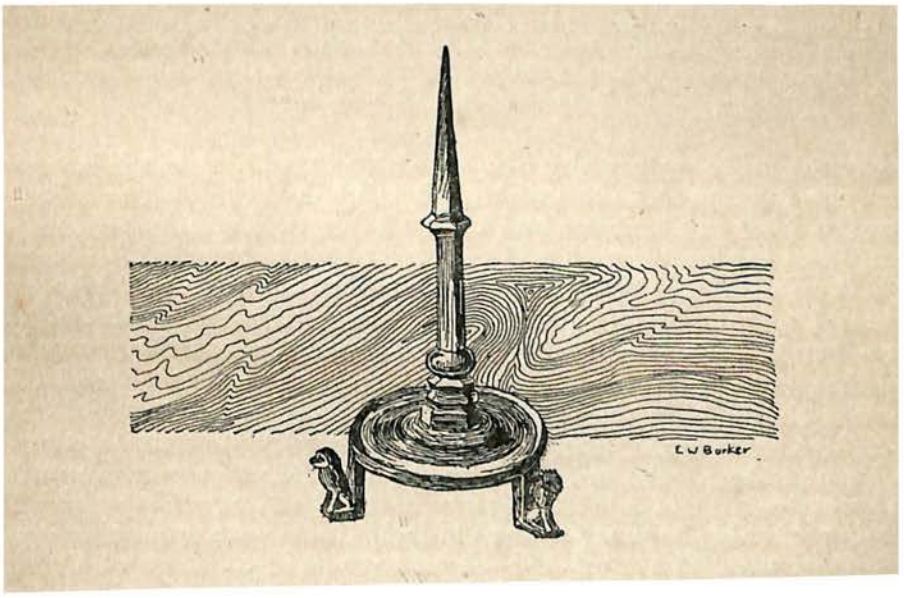
In his relations to the church he displayed both reverence and self-respect. From conviction as well as policy, he was a staunch supporter of Christianity

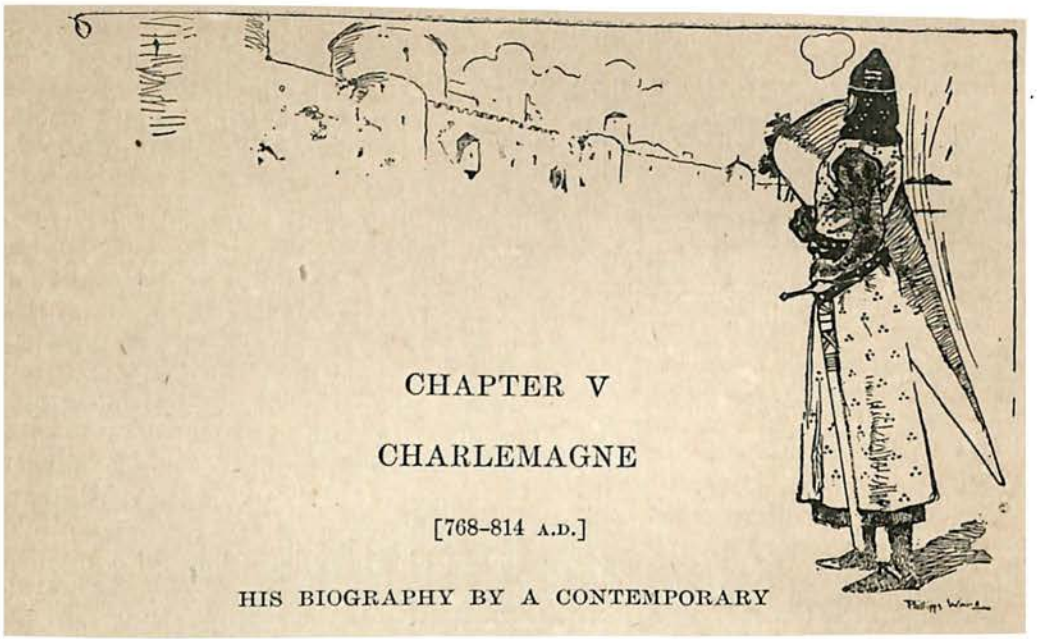
[768 A.D.]

and the Roman church: but he was no weak fanatic; he cherished and advanced the clergy, and availed himself of their superior learning in the conduct of his affairs; but he was by no means inclined to give way to immoderate pretensions on their part. He always remained their master, though a kind and considerate one; nor did he scruple to make use of their overflowing coffers for the general purposes of the state.

Of his private life we know scarcely anything at all; but we have no reason to suppose that it was inconsistent with that respect for religion, that love of order, justice, and moderation which he generally manifested in his public acts. In his last campaigns against Waifar and the Aquitanians alone does he seem to have been betrayed into a cruel and vindictive line of conduct; and from them, as we have seen, he received the greatest provocation.

With such high qualities, important transactions, and glorious deeds connected with his name, we might wonder that the fame of Pepin is not greater, did we not know the diminishing force of unfavourable contrast. Unfortunately, for his renown at least, he had a father and a son still greater than himself. Such a man would have risen like an alp from the level plain of ordinary kings: as it is, he forms but a link in a long chain of eminences, of which he is not the highest; and thus it has come to pass that the tomb of one who ruled a mighty empire for twenty-five years with invariable success, who founded a new dynasty of kings, and established the popes on their earthly throne, is inscribed with the name of his still more glorious successor; and all his high qualities and glorious deeds appear to be forgotten in the fact that he was "*Pater Caroli Magni!*" [b]





# CHAPTER V

# CHARLEMAGNE

[768–814 A.D.]

## HIS BIOGRAPHY BY A CONTEMPORARY

[The chief source of our information concerning the personality of Charles the Great, is the biography by Eginhard or Einhard, who was intimately associated with the king and his family, and was highly esteemed and trusted. Soon after the death of his master he wrote the story of his life. The uniqueness of the document, its charm of diction, and its intimacy make it invaluable, while its brevity permits us to translate it from the Latin and present it here entire. The reader must be cautioned that, as a document of history, this account is not always accurate in details. The following discrepancies might be noted: Carloman reigned over three years instead of two; the empire was not divided in the way stated between the two brothers; indecisive battles like the engagement on the Berre are given as decisive; and the names of popes are confounded in places (Ranke). But in spite of these mistakes the general picture of Charles by Einhard stands lifelike and doubtless accurate in the main.]

HAVING made up my mind to set down in writing the life, the public career, and in some sort the great exploits of my dear lord and benefactor Charles, a king pre-eminent and of most just and glorious fame, I have encompassed the matter with all the brevity at my command. I have taken care that of all that might come to my notice nothing should be omitted, also that I might not offend the most delicate minds by narrating at too great a length each new particular; if indeed it may in any way be contrived that a new and recent essay should not offend those who sniff even at ancient chronicles compiled by authors the most learned and the most lucid. Men there are, I doubt not, in great numbers, servants of ease and disciples of letters, who are of opinion that the state of the present age should not be held of such trifling account that everything which is now happening should be condemned entirely to silence and oblivion as if unworthy of commemoration. Such men wrapt in the love of immortality had rather insert the shining deeds of others in any sort of writing, than rob posterity of the fame of their own name by writing nothing. Yet have I not thought well to refrain from writing of this category, since I was aware that no one could set down more veraciously than myself the things in which I myself took part, and which I knew to be true with the knowledge of an eye-witness as they call it, nor could I clearly know whether or no they would be recorded by another. Therefore I judged it better to transmit in common to posterity records the same as other written works, rather than suffer the most glorious life of a king pre-eminent and the greatest of his

[751 A.D.]

age to perish in the shades of oblivion together with victories most splendid and hard to be repeated by men of modern times.

Another course (no light one, I fancy), sufficient in itself to urge me to this composition, lurked in my mind. This was the tender care lavished upon me, and my uninterrupted friendship with himself and his children after I began to pass my life in his palace; for by this he bound me to him with the closest ties, and made me a debtor to him alive or dead. So that I might justly appear and be judged to be ungrateful if, unmindful of all the benefits heaped upon me, I were to pass over in silence the clear and brilliant deeds of one who deserved so well of me, if I were to suffer his life as though he had never lived to remain without the written praise that is its due, the writing and unfolding whereof needs not my poor little wit, which is thin and slender — nay, which is all but the merest nothing — but rather the eloquence of a Tully to the last drop. Here, reader, you have the book containing a memorial of the most eminent and the greatest man, wherein you shall see nothing but the deeds wrought by this man to marvel at, unless it were that I, a foreigner[1] very little versed in the Latin speech, should think myself able to write properly and neatly in Latin, and should have fallen headlong into such immodesty as to imagine that saying of Cicero may be despised wherein, talking of Latin writers in the second book of the *Tusculans*, he is reported to have said: "For one to commit his meditations to writing who can neither place them orderly or illustrate them clearly, nor entice the reader by any delightful device, is the office of a man who recklessly abuseth both his free time and the profession of letters."

This opinion of the noble orator had availed to deter me from my work, had I not a prejudice in my mind in favour of rather suffering the judgment of critics and making venture of my own small wit in writing, than sparing myself and passing over the memory of so great a man.

The family of the Merovingians from which the Franks had been wont to choose their king is said to have ended with the king Childeric, who was dethroned by the command of Stephen the Roman pontiff; his hair was cut off and he was thrust into a monastery. With him the line may seem to have closed, yet for a long while it had lacked all vigour nor had any member shown distinction in himself outside the empty title of king; for the wealth and power of the kingdom had passed into the control of the prefects of the palace who were known as "mayors of the household," and to whom belonged the supreme initiative; nor was anything left to the king but to enjoy the royal title, the long hair, the drooping beard, to sit back in a chair of state and simulate the air of a supreme ruler, give audience to the ambassadors hailing from all parts of the earth and on their departure to retail to them as if from the depths of his own majesty the answers which he had been taught or told to make.

So that, except for the useless name of king and an uncertain subsidy for living which the prefect of the palace would dole out to him as the mood took him, he possessed no morsel to call his own unless it were one farm and that of extremely slender profit. Here he would keep his house and servants to minister to him the necessaries of life and to display the respectful deference of a thin multitude of retainers.

Wherever he had to go, he travelled in a wagon drawn by a yoke of oxen and with an oxherd for a charioteer in true country fashion. In this way he would ride to his palace, to the public assembly of his people which met

[1 He is believed to have been born on the Main in modern Hesse-Darmstadt. As to his apology for his poor Latinity, it may be said that he was remarkably versed for his time in Latin.]

every year to further the advantages of the kingdom, in this way he would ride home again. The administration of the kingdom and all domestic and foreign business were conducted by the mayor of the palace.

This was the office filled by Pepin, the father of King Charles, at the time of Childeric's deposition. It had already in some sort become hereditary. For Pepin's father Charles had also held it with distinction and it had come down to him from his father Pepin. This Charles had put down throughout all Frankland those tyrants who claimed for themselves an independent sovereignty; also he had beaten the Saracens who aimed at the occupation of Gaul, in two mighty battles, one in Aquitania not far from the city of Poitiers, the other near Narbonne hard by the river Birra—a sore defeat so that he compelled them to return into Spain. Thus the office of mayor was an honour wont to be bestowed by the people on none but those eminent in the nobility of their birth and in the magnitude of their wealth.

When Pepin, the father of King Charles, had held for some years this office which had come down to him and his brother Carloman from sire to grandsire, the two having reigned jointly in most perfect harmony, Carloman, I know not why, yet most likely because he was fired with a passion for a life of contemplation, left the laborious administration of a temporal kingdom and withdrew himself to the peace of Rome, where he changed his habit, became a monk, built a monastery on Mount Soracte touching the church of St. Silvester, and in company with the brothers who had accompanied him thither drew a long and joyous draught of the repose that he had coveted for some years. But as many companies of Frankish noblemen were wont to make pilgrimage to Rome to fulfil their vows and would not leave unvisited one who was their former sovereign, they broke into that retirement which was his chief delight by their frequent salutation and compelled him to change his domicile. For when he saw that company of this sort stood in the light of his fixed intent, he left the mountain, withdrew to the province of Samnium to the holy Benedictine monastery on Mount Cassino, and there completed all that remained of his worldly life in religious exercises.

But Pepin from being the mayor of the palace was made king through the sanction of the Roman pontiff and governed the Franks alone for fifteen years or more. Men were nearing the close of the Aquitanian War which he had begun and continued to wage against Waifar, the duke of Aquitaine, through nine long years, when he died of a dropsy at Paris, leaving two sons, Charles and Carloman, who by the will of God succeeded to the kingdom. The Franks solemnly convened a general assembly and appointed them both kings with this preliminary condition, that they should divide equally the whole realm and Charles was to take over for government that part which had belonged to their father Pepin, and Carloman that part which had been presided over by their uncle Carloman. The terms were accepted on both sides, and a portion of the divided kingdom was received by each in the measure that was his due. So this system was peaceably preserved, although with grave difficulty, for many of the adherents of Carloman strove hard to break up the bond of union, so much so that there were certain people whose design was to plunge the brothers in war. But the issue of events bore witness that there was more mistrust than veritable danger in the matter, for when Carloman died his wife and children together with some of the first nobility showed contempt for the brother of her husband without any cause at all and fled to Italy to place herself and her children under the protection of Desiderius, king of the Lombards. The kingdom had been under joint administration for two years, when Carloman succumbed to

[771-774 A.D.]

disease. On the death of his brother, Charles was made king with the consent of all the Franks (771).

I have determined to pass by the birth, infancy, and even boyhood[1] of Charles, for nothing has ever been set down in writing about them nor is anyone known to survive who can affirm that he has knowledge of them. So I thought it foolish to write of them, and turned to unfold and display the exploits and character and the rest of the life of that illustrious man, omitting the part that is unknown. So that my tale is first of his achievements at home and abroad, then of his habits and tastes, of the administration of his kingdom, and finally of his death, nor will I omit anything that is either worthy or necessary to be known.

First of all the wars he waged was the Aquitanian, which had been begun and not finished by his father. It seemed possible to go through with it rapidly, so while his brother was yet alive he asked for his help and undertook the war. His brother it is true cheated him of the promised aid, yet he would not desist from his eager pursuit of the campaign, having once engaged upon the task, until by a certain long patience he had brought to a perfect conclusion what he had striven hard to do. Hunoldus, too, who after the death of Waifar had tried to seize Aquitaine and renew a war by now well-nigh ended, was forced to flee from Aquitaine and take refuge in Gascony. Charles however did not suffer him to stay there, but crossing the river Garonne he commanded Loup the duke of the Gascons to give up the fugitive ; which were he not to do with all haste, Charles would wrest him from the enemy by force of arms. But Loup, wise counsellor that he was, not only gave up Hunoldus but also put himself and the province over which he presided at the disposition of Charles (769).

## THE ITALIAN WAR (772-774 A.D.)

When these matters in Aquitaine were settled and this war ended, his fellow-ruler being withdrawn from the affairs of this world, Charles was earnestly besought by the prayers of Adrian, bishop of the city of Rome, to undertake a war against the Lombards. This had been done before by his father at the instance of Stephen the pope, in spite of great obstacles, for there were certain among the chief Frankish nobles with whom the king was wont to take counsel, who opposed themselves so strictly to his will that they cried at the top of their voices that they would abandon the king to his fate and go their way home. Notwithstanding this, war had been made against King Aistulf, and brought to a speedy conclusion. But although the same reason for war seemed even more strong to Charles than it had been to his father, yet it is clear the contest was not so laborious, nor was it ended with a similar result. Pepin for his part besieged King Aistulf for a few days in Pavia, and compelled him to give hostages and to restore the fortified towns and castles which he had snatched from the Romans, and to take a solemn oath that he would not attempt to recapture what he had restored. Charles, on the other hand, when war had once been begun by him, did not cease hostilities until King Desiderius, wearied by a long siege, had surrendered, and his son Adelchis, on whom the hopes of all were rested, had been forced to flee not only from his kingdom, but from Italy. All that had been forcibly taken from the Romans was restored to them.

[1 We are curiously in the dark as to the date of Charles' birth. There are reasons for accepting each of the following dates, — 742, 743, 744, and 747. The first is probably the correct date.]

Hrudogast, prefect of the duchy of Friuli, who aimed at revolution, was crushed, the whole of Italy was reduced to the dominion of Charles, and his son Pepin made king of the conquered territory.

And I would describe how difficult was the passage across the Alps as he entered Italy, and what great labour it cost the Franks to cross the trackless ridges of the mountains, and the steep rocks that tower up into the sky, were not my intention in the present work to communicate the events concerning my hero's own life rather than those concerning the wars which he waged. Yet I will add that the war ended in the conquest of Italy, King Desiderius was banished into perpetual exile, his son Adelchis was driven from Italy, and the property stolen from the king of the Lombards was restored to Adrian, the rector of the Roman church.

## THE SAXON WAR (772-804 A.D.)

No sooner was this finished than the Saxon War, in which there had seemed to be a kind of pause, was renewed. The Frankish people never engaged in a task more protracted, fiercer, or more wearisome; for the Saxons, like almost all the nations inhabiting Germany, are cruel by nature, abandoned to the cult of devils, foes of our religion, nor do they think it wrong to violate or transgress any law, whether human or divine. They had an easy means of disturbing the peace daily, for of a truth their boundaries and ours touched at almost any point in the open, except in a few places where either wide stretches of forest land or the ridges of intervening mountains set an indisputable limit to the lands of both countries. Everywhere else indiscriminate bloodshed, plunder, and burning were incessant. This so stung the Franks that they were not content with returning one evil turn with another, but determined to make open war upon their neighbours. And so war was declared against them, and waged for thirty long years with great bitterness on both sides, but the Saxons suffered greater injury than the Franks. Hostilities might have ended sooner but for the perfidy of the Saxons. It is difficult to tell how often they were beaten and surrendered themselves humbly to the king, promising to do his bidding. The hostages claimed of them that they would surrender with alacrity, and acknowledge the ambassadors sent them. Sometimes they were so cowed and enervated that they even promised to abandon their cult of devils, saying they would fain submit to the Christian religion; but ready as they were sometimes to do this they were always in a hurry to undo it again, so that it is hard to guess to which of these courses they may the more truly be said to have leaned; for after the war with them had begun, scarce a single year reached its conclusion without their shifting from one view to another in this way. But their mutability, were it never so great, could never overcome the king's high spirit and constancy of mind, in adversity as in prosperity, nor could it tire him out of fulfilling what he had begun to do. For they never did an act of treachery

A SAXON

[772–804 A.D.]

which he suffered to pass unpunished. He would despatch an army, either under his own leadership or under that of his peers, and take vengeance on the enemy's perfidy, mulcting them in damages worthy of the offence, until at last he had reduced to his will all the miserable rebels who offered him habitual resistance. He then transported ten thousand men of the inhabitants on both banks of the Elbe, with their wives and little children, distributing them here and there over Gaul and Germany in fragmentary groups. When they had agreed to the following conditions imposed upon them by the king, the war that had lasted so many years was declared at an end: — The cult of the devils was to be abandoned, the native rites discontinued,[1] the sacraments of the Christian faith and religion were to be adopted: united to the Franks they were to form one people with them.

Though this war lasted over so long a space of time, the king himself did not fight more than two pitched battles with the enemy, one near a hill called Osneng in a place called Theotmel (Detmold), the other on the river Hasa, both in the same month and at a few days' interval. In these two battles the enemy were so demoralised by defeat that they no longer dared to provoke the king to battle or to offer resistance to him when he attacked, except in a place where they were protected by fortification.

In this war perished a large number of nobles, both Frankish as well as Saxon, men of high distinction. At last, in the thirty-third year, it came to an end. During this time wars so many and so great sprang up against the Franks in diverse parts of the earth, wars directed with such skill by the king, that well might the onlooker be perplexed whether to admire most the patience of his essays or the success which crowned them. Two years before the Italian war, began this war (against Desiderius), which was waged without intermission, and yet there was no relaxation in any of the other wars that had to be carried on, nor was there anywhere any respite from battle attended with equal difficulties. The king, who excelled all the sovereigns of his age in foresight and largeness of mind, never weakly shrank from taking up and following to the end a duty either because it was difficult or dangerous. He was well versed in a knowledge of how to weigh such matter according to its intrinsic value, not to give way in adversity, and not to be duped by the smiles of specious fortune in prosperity.

### THE PASS OF RONCESVALLES (778 A.D.)

While the Saxon War was being ardently and incessantly pursued, garrisons were placed in the most suitable places on the borders, and Charles marched into Spain with the greatest equipment of war that he could command. He crossed the Pyrenees, received the submission of all towns and castles that he approached, and returned with his army safe and sound. It was on his return through that very Pyrenean pass that he happened to

[1 On one of these forays in 772, Charles cut down the sacred idol Irminsul, symbolic of the column which in the Odinic cosmogony supported the world; his army was threatened with destruction by thirst, which the Saxons took as a proof of sacrilege; when a cloudburst however saved the army, many of the Saxons were converted to the more potent deity. Another account states that the army obtained water from the sudden starting of an intermittent spring. There is no doubt that the destruction of the Irminsul cast a great gloom over the Saxon army. Deputies were sent to Charles' camp with promises that Christian priests would be received and with offers to send twelve hostages for their safety. Charles treated them with great moderation, hoping they would remain quiet under the great blow he had dealt until he could attend to other pressing matters.]

encounter a slight show of Gascon treachery. The army was moving in column, in extended formation, as was made necessary by the narrowness of the pass, when the Gascons, who had placed ambuscades on the high ledge of the mountain (for the dense foliage of the place, which is thickly wooded, makes it suitable for the disposal of an ambush), rushed down from their vantage ground, falling upon the extreme section of the baggage and those who manned the baggage train and drove them into the valley below. Here the Gascons fought a pitched battle with them, killed them all to a man, destroyed the baggage, took advantage of the cover of night which was drawing over them, and with the greatest rapidity dispersed in different directions. The Gascons were aided in this feat by the lightness of their arms and the nature of the place in which the engagement was determined; whereas the Franks, on the other hand, were made inferior to the Gascons at every point by the weight of their armour and the ugliness of their situation. In this battle fell Eggihard, the king's server, Anselm Pfalsgraf, and Roland, count of the Breton march, with many others besides. Nor could the injury be avenged at the time, because when the thing had been perpetrated the enemy dispersed with so much cunning that there remained not even the breath of a rumour as to where in the world they might be hunted out.

### THIRD VISIT TO ITALY (787 A.D.)

Charles also subjugated the Bretons who dwell by the coast on the extreme west of Gaul. They were not obedient to the king's word, so he sent an expedition against them, whereupon they were compelled to grant hostages and make a promise to do what they were told. After this the king himself entered Italy with his army, and making his way through Rome, marched upon Capua, a city of Campania, and when he had pitched his camp there threatened the Beneventines with war unless they surrendered. Arichis, the duke, avoided this by sending his two sons, Romwald and Grimwald, with a large sum of money to meet the king, whom he asked to accept them as hostages, promising to do what he was told, except in the event of one command, which was if he should be forced himself to come face to face with the king. Charles, taking the national welfare into greater consideration than the stubborn character of the duke's mind, accepted the hostages offered to him, and in return for a large sum of money conceded to him the favour that he should not be compelled to meet him face to face. Only the younger son of Arichis was kept as a hostage, the elder was returned to his father. The ambassadors who had come to exact oaths of allegiance from the Beneventines, and to make an agreement with Arichis for taking them up on their behalf, were now discharged, and the king returned to Rome. He spent a few days there in holy visits to the sacred places of the city and then went back into Gaul.

### BAVARIAN WAR WITH TASSILO (787–788 A.D.)

Next came the Bavarian War, which suddenly flamed up and swiftly died down. It was aroused at once by the arrogance and by the folly of Duke Tassilo. He had married a daughter of King Desiderius, who thought to avenge her father's exile by her husband's agency. Tassilo made an alliance with the Huns, whose boundary touches that of the Bavarians on the east. Not only did he try to win his independence, but also to provoke the king

[788-796 A.D.]

to war. His violence seeming too great for the high-spirited king to brook, he gathered together forces from all sides for an incursion into Bavaria, and straightway advanced to the river Lech himself with a large army. This river divides the Bavarians from the Alamanni. He pitched his camp on the banks before entering the province and determined to ascertain the temper of the duke by means of ambassadors. Tassilo, thinking it neither to his own advantage nor to that of his country to act obstinately, surrendered himself to the king's mercy, and gave the hostages required, among them being his own son Theodo. In addition to this, he took an oath of allegiance by which he bound himself to be induced by the persuasion of nobody to revolt from the sovereignty of the king.[1] In this way a very swift end was put to a war which had given promise of becoming a great one. Tassilo being summoned soon after to the king was not, however, allowed to return; the province which he had governed was no longer entrusted to a duke but to the charge of counts.

## WARS IN THE NORTH AND WITH THE AVARS (791-796 A.D.)

When these commotions were thus allayed war was begun against the Slavs, whom we are accustomed to call Wilzi, but who are more properly termed in their own tongue Welatabi. In this war among other nations who were bidden to rally round the king's ensigns, the Saxons fought as our allies, but their obedience was feigned and far from being truly devoted. The cause of the war was that the Welatabi harried the Abodriti, who had in former days been allied with the Franks; nor could the assiduity of their incursions be checked by orders. There is a certain gulf which stretches eastwards from the western ocean, of unascertained length, but of a width which nowhere exceeds a hundred miles, whereas in many places it is narrower. Many nations are gathered round its border, such as Danes and Swedes whom we call Northmen, and they occupy the northern shores and all the islands in the gulf. But the southern shores are inhabited by Slavs and Aisti, and divers other nations among whom the chief are the Welatabi against whom the king was now making war. In one expedition, which he conducted in person, he so utterly crushed and humbled them, that in future they were advised to do as they were told without the smallest show of resistance.

The war following this was, with the exception of the Saxon War, the greatest of all those waged by my hero; it was that memorable war against the Avars or Huns. The king set about it with even greater spirit and with far greater military resources than had gone to the others. Yet he himself made but one expedition into Pannonia, the province then inhabited by the Avars. The rest of the campaigns were entrusted to his son Pepin and the prefects of the provinces, and to the counts and lieutenants. They used the utmost diligence in the conduct of affairs; yet eight years had well-nigh passed before the war was ended. What a great many battles were fought, what blood was shed, the desolate Pannonia, empty of all living creatures, bears witness. Moreover, the place in which was situate the royal palace of the chagan (khan) is so abandoned that you cannot see a trace of human habitation in it. The whole nobility of the Avars perished in this war, and the entire glory of the nation was extinguished. All their money

[1 He was tried the same year, his royal locks shorn, and his person immured in a convent. With him end the Agilolfings.]

and long-accumulated treasures were seized; nor can human memory recall any war of the Franks in which they have won greater spoil or been more enriched.

Up to this time, sure enough, the Franks had appeared to be a poor nation; but now so much gold and silver was found in the royal treasury, such a heap of valuable spoil was taken in battle, that we may safely assume that the Franks seized this new wealth from the Huns, and rightly too, for had not the Huns before this seized it wrongfully from other nations? Only two among the chiefs of the Frankish nobility fell in this war,—Eric, duke of Friuli, killed in Liburnia, near Tharsatica (Fiume), a maritime state, who was entrapped in an ambush laid by the townspeople; and Gerold, prefect of the Bavarians, who was killed in Pannonia while drawing up his men in line of battle in the act of engaging with the Huns. No one knew who did the deed, for he was killed, with the two others who rode in his company, as he spoke a word of encouragement to each man along the ranks. But for this, the war was almost a bloodless one for the Franks and had a most prosperous ending, although it was prolonged far beyond what was natural from its size.

### DANISH WAR (808–810 A.D.)

When this and the Saxon War had been brought to an end which their tediousness made welcome, the two wars which followed, one against the Bohemians and the other against the Linonians, did not last long, for they were both speedily despatched under the direction of Charles the Younger. The last war to be undertaken was that against the Northmen who are called Danes. At first they indulged in pirate warfare, and later they ravaged the shores of Gaul and Germany with a large fleet. So puffed up with vain ambition was their king, Godfrey,[1] that he thought he would gain the sovereignty of all Germany for his own. Frisia and Saxony he simply regarded as his own provinces; he had already brought the neighbouring Abodriti under his sway and made them tributary to him. He even would boast that in a little while he would appear with his enormous army at Aachen,[2] where the king held his court. Nor was all faith denied to his talk, empty as it was; on the contrary, he rather acquired the reputation of a man who would have begun some such enterprise had he not been arrested by a premature death. He was murdered by one of his own servants, and so ended abruptly his life and the war that he had inaugurated.

### GLORY OF CHARLEMAGNE

Such are the wars which this most puissant king waged during forty-seven years—a long reign—in divers parts of the earth with superlative skill and good fortune. By these he so nobly enlarged the kingdom of the Franks which he had taken over after his father Pepin, that great and powerful as it already was, he nearly doubled it. For previously those Franks called Eastern inhabited only that part of Gaul which lies between the Rhine and the Loire, the ocean and the Balearic Sea, and that part of Germany situate between Saxony and the Danube, the Rhine and the Saal which latter river divides the Thuringii from the Sorabi. The Alamanni

[1 Also spelled Godefrid or Göttrick.]
[2 Aix-la-Chapelle, the *Aquisgranum* or *Civites Aquensis* of the Romans.]

[768-810 A.D.]

and the Bavarians also belonged to the sovereignty of the Frankish kingdom. But Charles, by the wars I have enumerated, completely subjugated and made tributary first Aquitaine and Gascony and the whole range of the Pyrenean Mountains even as far as the Ebro, which river in Navarre crosses the most fertile lands of Spain and mingles its waters with the Balearic Sea, beneath the walls of the city Tortosa; then the whole of Italy from Aosta to lower Calabria where men place the boundaries of the Greeks and Beneventines, an extent of more than a thousand miles long; then Saxony which is no small part of Germany and is supposed to be twice as broad as the part in which the Franks dwell, with a length which is equal to that of the other; then both Pannonia and Dacia which lies on the other bank of the Danube, Istria too and Liburnia and Dalmatia, except the maritime towns which because of his friendly feeling for the Constantinopolitan emperor and a treaty to which they had both agreed Charles allowed him to hold; lastly all the wild and uncouth nations which inhabit Germany between the Rhine and the Vistula, the ocean and the Danube, who speak almost the same tongue but are widely different in character and in dress. Chief among these were the Welatabi, Sorabi, Abodriti, and Bæmanni, for these showed resistance in fight; the rest who were more numerous surrendered.

A Saxon Warrior

He also added glory to the kingdom by the friendly sentiments of certain kings and nations which he won to himself. Thus Alfonso, king of Galicia and Asturias was so linked to him by the bond of friendship that when he sent him letters or messengers he gave orders that he should be spoken of as Charles' servant. The kings of the Scots too had been so bent to his will through his munificence that they never alluded to him in other terms than as their lord and called themselves his humble vassals. Letters from them to him still exist in which it may be seen that their attitude towards him was of this kind. Harun, king of the Persians who held well-nigh all the East if we except India, was in such hearty sympathy with the king that he valued his good will more than that of all the kings and princes in the world, thinking him alone worthy to be honoured by his regard and munificence. When the officers sent by Charles with offerings to the most sacred sepulchre and place of the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour came to Harun and told him what was the will of their master he not only allowed them to do what was required but even yielded up to them that revered and sacred spot to be registered as belonging to the sovereignty of Charles. When the ambassadors returned he sent his own to accompany them bearing splendid presents to the king with garments and spices and other rich products of the East, just as a few years before at Charles' request he sent him the only elephant

he then possessed. Even the Constantinopolitan emperors, Nicephorus, Michael, and Leo expressly sought after his friendly allegiance and sent him numerous embassies. To remove all source of possible offence to them on account of his having adopted the title of emperor, which might truly be suspected as in some sort an attempt to wrest from them the imperial supremacy, he entered into a most rigid treaty. For the power of the Franks was ever an object of suspicion to the Greeks and Romans, whence arose the Greek proverb, "Have a Frank for a friend and not for a neighbour."

Great as the king was in enlarging the kingdom and in conquering foreign nations, busy as he was in affairs of this kind, he yet started a great number of works for the embellishment and convenience of the kingdom. Some of them he carried through to the finish. The chief place among these seems rightly to be assigned to the Basilica of the Holy Mother of God, which was built at Aachen, a miracle of workmanship, and to the bridge over the Rhine at Mainz, five hundred paces in length, so broad is the river at that place. This bridge, however, was ruined by fire a year before the king's death, nor could it be restored on account of the nearness of his demise, although it was in his mind to replace the woodwork by stone. He also began some magnificent palaces — one not far from the town of Mainz near the village called Ingelheim and another at Nimeguen on the river Waal which flows past the island of the Batavians on the southern side. But above all he noted the sacred churches throughout the whole kingdom wherever they had fallen to ruin because of their age, and gave orders to the priests and fathers in whose care they were to superintend their restoration, appointing officials to see that his orders were carried out. He also constructed a fleet for the war against the Northmen, making dock yards for this purpose on the rivers of Gaul and Germany which flow into the North Sea; and because the Northmen ravaged the shores of Gaul and Germany by constant active inroads, he posted towers and outlooks in all the harbours and at the mouths of all those rivers which were navigable. By these defences he stopped the enemy from being able to pass. He did the same in the south on the coast of the provinces of Narbonne and Septimania, and all along the coast of Italy as far as Rome, in order to put a check on the Moors who had lately taken to piratical practices. By this means Italy suffered no harm from the Moors, nor Gaul and Germany from the Northmen in his days, with the exception that Civita Vecchia, a town of Etruria, was betrayed to the Moors who razed it to the ground, and certain islands in Frisia off the German coast were plundered by the Northmen.

Such was clearly the character of the king at once in the defence, in the enlargement and in the embellishment of his kingdom. We may well marvel at his gifts and at that superlative steadfastness which he showed in every circumstance whether of prosperity or adversity. Here I will begin and go on to talk of those other matters which belong to his inner life and his life in his home.

### HIS FAMILY

When his father died he shared the kingdom with his brother and bore that brother's quarrelsome envy with exemplary patience, so that all men marvelled that he could never be provoked into the slightest exhibition of angry conduct. At his mother's instigation he married a daughter of Desiderius, king of the Lombards, but after a year, for what reason is not known, he put her aside and took Hildegard to wife, a Swabian lady of high nobility by whom he

[768-810 A.D.]

had three sons, to wit, Charles and Pepin and Louis, and the same number of daughters, Hrotrud, Bertrada, and Gisila. He also had three other daughters, Theoderada and Hiltrud by his wife Fastrada, a German lady of eastern Frankish origin, and a third, Rothaid, by a concubine whose name escapes my memory. When Fastrada died he married Liutgard of the Alamanni, but she bore him no children. After her death he had three concubines, Gerswinda, a Saxon girl, who bore him a daughter Adaltrud, Regina, the mother of Drogo and Hugh, and Adalinda from whom he begat Theoderic. His mother, Bertrada, lived with him to old age, being held in high honour. For he lavished upon her the greatest reverence, so that except on the occasion of his divorcing the daughter of Desiderius whom he had married under his mother's persuasion, there never once rose a difference between them. Bertrada did not die until after the demise of Hildegard, having lived to see three grandsons and as many granddaughters in her son's house. Charles had his mother buried with much honour in the church of Saint Dionysius, the same as that wherein lay his father. Her one sister, Gisila, who had devoted herself ever since her girlhood to a holy life, was treated by the king with the same pious affection that he had shown for his mother. She died a few years before him in the convent to which she had retired.

As for children he thought they should be so brought up, both sons and daughters, as to be first informed of those liberal studies to which he himself devoted his attention. For his sons as soon as their age permitted it, he ordered riding in the Frankish style, the practice of arms, and the chase; for his daughters, woolspinning, the use of distaff and spindle; they were to beware of becoming slothful by reason of their leisure, they were to be instructed in every virtuous occupation. Of his numerous family two sons and one daughter died before him, Charles the eldest and Pepin whom he had made king of Italy, and Hrotrud his eldest daughter who was betrothed to Constantine the emperor of the Greeks. Pepin left a son Bernhard and five daughters, Adalhaid, Atula, Guntrada, Berthaid, and Theoderada. The king showed marked evidence of his affection for them, allowing his grandson to succeed to his father's kingdom and his granddaughters to be educated with his own daughters. The greatness of his soul was so eminent that he bore the death of his sons and of his daughter with exceeding patience which did in no wise detract from his affection, for his tears would not be held back. When he heard the news of the death of Adrian, the Roman pontiff and his chiefest friend, he wept as bitterly as if he had lost his dearest son or brother. For he showed the finest loyalty in his friendships, forming them readily and preserving them with the utmost constancy and he cherished the purest affection for those whom he had attached to himself by the ties of sympathy. So much care did he bestow on the education of his sons and daughters that he never took his meals at home without them. In travelling his sons rode by his side, his daughters followed close behind, their train being guarded by servants specially appointed for this purpose. So beautiful were his daughters and so tender was his affection for them that strange to say he would not consent to give any of them in marriage either to one of his own nation or to a foreigner, but he kept them all with him until his death in his house, saying he could not do without their society. On this account, although lucky in all else, he experienced the malice of ill fortune. Yet he hid his thoughts and behaved as if no suspicion of any evil had ever arisen about any of them, as if no rumours had ever been spread.

He had by a concubine[1] a son called Pepin whom I have forborne to mention among the others; he had a good countenance but was deformed by a hunchback. During the war against the Huns, while his father was wintering in Bavaria this boy feigned sickness and made a plot against his father with certain of the Frankish nobility who had fascinated him with the idle promise of the kingdom. When the fraud had been detected and the conspirators had paid the penalty the king caused the boy to shave his beard and allowed him to pass his time in religious exercises in the abbey at Prum to which he objected nothing.[1] Another powerful conspiracy had been previously made against him in Germany; the originators were some of them blinded, and some of them had got off safe and sound, but all had been exiled. Death was not inflicted except on three who, drawing their swords to avoid being captured, even went so far as to kill some of those sent to take them, so that they were despatched because there was no other way of keeping them quiet.

The cause and origin of these plots is supposed to have been the cruelty of queen Fastrada and in both cases the king was the object of the plot because in acquiescing in his wife's cruelty he seemed to have taken a monstrous departure from the gentleness of his nature and his usual clemency. For all the rest of his life he showed so much love and consideration for all men both at home and abroad that not even a murmur of undue cruelty was ever raised against him by anyone.

He had a great love of foreigners and showed so much anxiety to receive them that the multitude of them came to be thought burdensome not only to the palace but also to the kingdom. The high-minded king himself was however not in the least oppressed by a responsibility of this kind, knowing that such inconveniences were outweighed by the wide reputation for generosity and the reward of fair fame which were his.

## HIS PERSONAL LOOK AND HABITS

Charles was of large and robust frame and commanding stature, though his height was not excessive (it is said to have measured seven times the length of his own foot). The top of his head was round, his eyes were larger than usual and full of life, his nose rather prominent; he had noble white hair, and his face was sanguine and of cheerful aspect. Whether standing or sitting he thus had the advantage of a very great presence and dignity. His neck was thick and too short, and his stomach too prominent; these defects however were lost in the fair balance of the rest of his limbs. His step was firm, the whole carriage of his body masculine, but his voice, although it was clear, was not in true harmony with the size of his frame: his health was sound except for the last four years of his life, when he was attacked by frequent fever; towards the end he even walked lame on one foot. And even in that last extremity he acted more as he willed himself than upon the advice of the doctors whom he thoroughly detested because they urged him to discontinue roasted meat at his meals which it was his habit to eat, and accustom himself to boiled. He took much exercise on horseback and in the chase which was a national characteristic in him, for there is scarcely a nation on earth which can equal the Franks in this art. He had much pleasure in the vapour of natural warm springs and practised

[1] Hodgkin *c* calls him the son of Charles' wife Himiltrud. But this conspiracy took place in 972. See the later remarks on the state of concubinage.]

[768–810 A.D.]

his body in frequent swimming of which he was such a master that no one could be truly said to excel him in this. On account of the warm springs he even built a palace at Aachen, where in the last year of his life he dwelt continuously until his death. Not only did he invite his sons to the baths, but also his nobles and friends, sometimes even a crowd of his servants and bodyguard, so that there were times when a hundred or even more men were bathing together.

A Frankish Trumpeter

He wore the dress of his country, that is, the Frankish: on his body, a linen shirt and linen thigh coverings; then a tunic with a silken hem and stockings. He wound garters round his legs and clad his feet in shoes. His chest and shoulders were protected from the cold by a doublet of otter and sable skin. Wrapped in a sea-blue cloak he always carried a sword at his girdle, this and the hilt being interlaced silver and gold. Sometimes he wore a sword studded with gems, but only on high days and holidays or on the visit of some foreign embassy. He held the foreign styles of dress in the greatest contempt however fine they might be, nor would he ever submit to be robed in them. Only once, in Rome, at the request of the pontiff Adrian, and again at the earnest request of his successor Leo, did he wrap himself in the long tunic and chlamys and wear shoes of the Roman shape. On festival days he would stalk about in a garment woven with gold and shoes studded with precious stones; a golden pin clasped his cloak and he wore a splendid crown made of gold and jewels. On other days his dress differed little from that of an ordinary person.

He ate and drank moderately, but he was especially moderate in drinking for he had the greatest horror of drunkenness in any man to say nothing of himself and his companions. He was less abstemious in eating and would often growl that fasting was bad for his body. He very seldom gave banquets, indeed, only on the chief festival days, but then they were attended in great numbers. His daily meal was furnished from four courses in addition to the roast meat which the hunters were wont to bring in on spits and of which he partook more freely than of any other dish. While at his meals he would hear some sort of performance or reading. Histories and the valorous deeds of the men of old were read over to him. He was fond of the works of St. Augustine, especially of those entitled *De Civitate Dei*. He drank very sparingly of wine and other liquors, rarely taking at his meals more than three draughts. In summer after his midday repast he would take some fruit and one draught, then he would doff his clothes and shoes just as was his custom at night-time, and take two or three hours' rest. At night he slept so lightly that he would break his repose by waking and even by rising four or five times. While he was dressing and strapping

on his shoes he not only received his friends, but if the count of the palace informed him of any suit that could not be determined without his orders, he gave instructions to admit the litigants without further ado; he would then sit as if in court and give judgment on the dispute as soon as he had mastered it. Nor was this all that was settled at this time but he would then give orders for whatever official duty was to be performed on that day and give instructions to any particular servant to do his work.

His fluency of speech was resourceful and abundant and he could express with great openness whatever he wanted to say. Nor did his own language alone satisfy him, but he spent trouble in acquiring foreign tongues; of these he learned Latin so well that he would pray in Latin as freely as in his own language; he understood Greek, however, better than he could talk it. He was so voluble in speaking that he almost produced the impression of being a chatterer. He had the greatest respect for the liberal arts and their learned exponents whom he loaded with great honour. To learn grammar he attended the lectures of the aged Peter of Pisa, a deacon; for the rest of his instructions Albinus was his tutor, otherwise called Alcuin, also a deacon, a Saxon by race, from Britain, the most learned man of the day. With him the king spent most of his time and study in rhetoric and dialectics, and particularly in astronomy. He learned the art of reckoning by numbers and with deep thought and much skill most carefully investigated the courses of the stars. He tried to learn to write, and used to keep his tablets and copybook for this purpose beneath his pillow in bed, so that when he had leisure he could train his hand but he made little progress.

He devoted himself to the Christian religion which had been instilled into him in his infancy with the greatest holiness and piety, and on this account he built the Basilica of Aachen, a work of great beauty, which he embellished with silver and gold and with candlesticks and lattices and doors of solid brass. When he could not get columns and marble for this structure anywhere else, he caused them to be brought from Rome and from Ravenna. As long as his health permitted he was an untiring worshipper in church at matins and even-song and also during the hours of the night and at the time of the sacrifice, and he made it his great care that all the services of the church should be conducted with the greatest cleanliness. Very often he would caution the sacristans not to allow anything improper or foul to be brought into or left in the building. He provided quantities of sacred vessels, gold and silver, and of priestly vestments so that while the mass was celebrated no one — not even the doorkeepers, who are the lowest order of ecclesiastics — was obliged to perform his duties in private dress. He industriously improved the order of reading and chanting. For he was a master in both, though he did not read in public, nor sing above a whisper.

In helping the poor, in free charity, which the Greeks call almsgiving, he was devout, making this his care not only in his own country and kingdom, but he would often send money across the seas into Syria and Egypt and Africa, to Jerusalem and Alexandria and Carthage, where he knew the Christians were living in poverty, and out of compassion for their penury. To this end he untiringly sought the friendship of transpontine kings that some solace and comfort might be forthcoming to the Christians under their sway. Above all other sacred and venerable places in Rome he loved the church of St. Peter the apostle, the treasury of which he enriched with an immense sum in gold, in silver, and in jewels. He sent many countless gifts to the pontiffs, and during his whole reign nothing lay so near his heart as that the city of Rome should assume its ancient prerogative through

[800-814 A.D.]

his zeal and patronage, and that the church of St. Peter should not only be in safe keeping and protection through him, but should also be embellished and enriched with his presents above all other churches. Valuing this ambition as he did within the forty-seven years of his reign, he found leisure but four times to visit Rome for the sake of fulfilling his vows and praying.

## HIS IMPERIAL TITLE (800 A.D.)

These were not the only reasons for his last visit to Rome, but the Romans had compelled Pope Leo to implore the trusty assistance of the king when that pontiff had been most seriously injured, for they had torn out his eyes and cut out his tongue. So the king came to Rome to reform the condition of the church which was sorely disturbed, and he stayed there the whole winter in this pursuit. During this time he received the name of emperor and of augustus, to which at first he was so averse that he vowed that he would not have entered the church on that day, although it was a festival day, had he been able to foresee the intention of the pope. Yet he bore the envy that the name raised with the Roman emperors, who were most indignant at his assumption of it, with great patience, and he subdued their sullen hostility by a graciousness of demeanour in which he was most certainly their master, sending them frequent embassies and calling them his brothers in his letters to them.

Having adopted the imperial title he turned to the numerous deficiencies in the laws of his people—for the Franks have two laws which differ considerably in very many places. He meditated how to fill up the omissions and reconcile what conflicted and to correct what was mischievous and erroneously stated; but of these projects none were fulfilled except that he increased the laws by a few chapters and these were fragmentary. But he caused the laws of all nations under his dominion which had not been reduced to writing to be definitely codified. So too he wrote out and committed to memory the rough songs of antiquity in which the exploits and wars of the ancient kings used to be sung. He also began a grammar of his native speech. He gave names to the months in the national tongue, for before this the Franks spoke of them partly by the Latin and partly by foreign names. Also he designated the twelve winds by proper appellations, whereas before this, words could not be found for more than about four. The month January he called Wintarmanoth; February, Hornung; March, Lentzinmanoth; April, Ostarmanoth; May, Winnemanoth; June, Brachmanoth; July, Hewimanoth; August, Aranmanoth; September, Witumanoth; October, Windumemanoth; November, Herbistmanoth; December, Heilagmanoth. And the winds he named thus: that called in Latin Subsolanus he called Ostroniwint; Eurus, Ostsunderen; Euroauster, Sundostren; Auster, Sundren; Austroafricus, Sundwestren; Africus, Westsundren; Zephyrus, Westren; Chorus, Westnordren; Circius, Nordwestren; Septenrio, Nordren; Aquilo, Nordostren; Vulturnus, Ostnorden.

## HIS DEATH (814 A.D.)

Towards the close of his life when he was weighed down with illness and old age he called to him his son Louis, the king of Aquitaine and last surviving son of Hildegard, solemnly assembled the Frankish nobility from all

over the kingdom, and with the unanimous consent appointed Louis his partner in the whole kingdom and heir of the imperial title. Then he placed the royal crown on his head and decreed that he should be saluted as emperor and augustus. All those who were present hailed his doing this with much acclamation, for it seemed as if the king were divinely inspired for the welfare of his kingdom. For did he not by this act enlarge his own majesty and strike no small terror into the nations abroad? He discharged his son to Aquitaine and then, old as he was, set out for the chase as was his wont in the neighbourhood of the palace at Aachen. He spent what remained of the autumn in this pursuit, and then returned to Aachen early in November.

During the winter in the month of January he was seized with fever and took to his bed. He at once prescribed for himself, as he always did when he was attacked by fever, an abstinence from food, thinking that by a privation of this kind the disease might be banished or in any case reduced, but the pain increased until his side was inflamed (the Greeks call it "pleurisy"). Yet he continued to starve himself, keeping himself alive by an occasional draught until the seventh day after he had taken to his bed. He then received the holy communion and died on the 28th of January at nine o'clock, in the seventy-second year of his age and in the forty-seventh year of his reign (814).

They solemnly washed and tended his body, laying it in the church where it was buried amid the great grief of the whole nation. At first men doubted where he ought to rest, since he himself in his lifetime had left no directions in the matter. At last the minds of all were satisfied that nowhere could he more fitly be buried than in that church which he had built at his own cost at Aachen from his love of God and our Lord Jesus Christ and to the glory of the ever blessed Virgin his mother. Here then he was buried on the same day that he died. Above his tomb was erected a gilded monument with his effigy and title upon it. This famous title runs thus:

UNDER THIS TOMB LIES THE BODY OF
CHARLES THE GREAT AND ORTHODOX EMPEROR
WHO GLORIOUSLY ENLARGED THE REALM OF THE FRANKS AND
FORTUNATELY ORDERED THE KINGDOM FOR FORTY-SEVEN YEARS
HE HAD PASSED THE AGE OF SEVENTY WHEN HE DIED
JAN. XXVIII IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD DCCC XIIII
INDICTION VII

## PORTENTS OF CHARLEMAGNE'S DEATH

There were many portents of his approaching death, for not only others, but the king himself felt them. During the whole of his last three years there were eclipses both of the sun and of the moon, and certain spots of blackish hue were seen in the sun for the space of seven days. The portico which he had built with great labour between the church and the palace fell in a sudden and complete ruin from top to bottom on the day of the ascension of our Lord.

Also the wooden bridge across the Rhine at Mainz — which it had taken the king ten years of immense labour to construct, a work so marvellous that it seemed as if it would endure forever — chanced to catch fire, and was

[814 A.D.]

burned to a cinder in three days, so that not a single spar remained beyond what was protected under water. Again, when the king was in Saxony on his last campaign against Godefrid, king of the Danes, one day when the march had begun and he had left the camp before sunrise, he saw fall suddenly from heaven a blazing torch that flashed through the clear sky from right to left. While all wondered what this might portend, suddenly the king's horse fell right upon his head and hurled his rider with such violence to the ground that the pin of his mantle was broken and his sword belt burst. His attendants rushed up and loosened his armour, and with some help he was induced to rise. The javelin which he chanced to hold in his hand at the time was thrown from his grasp a distance of twenty feet or more. Nor is this all. The palace of Aachen was visited with frequent shakings, and the ceilings of the houses in which he dwelt cracked constantly. The church in which he was afterwards buried was visited by lightning, and the golden apple with which the apex of the roof was embellished was wrenched away and hurled away over the adjoining house of the priest. In this same church, on the ring of the cornice which ran round the interior of the building between the upper and lower arches, there was an inscription in red chalk relating who was the founder of the church, the last line ending with the words *Karolus Princeps*. It was noticed by certain persons that in the same year as that in which he died, a few months before that event, the letters spelling *Princeps* were so obliterated as almost to be invisible. But the king either concealed his feelings about all these warnings from on high, or else he scorned them as in no way relating to himself.

A Frankish Woman of Quality

## HIS WILL AND TESTAMENT

Charles intended to make a will in which he might provide to some extent for his daughters and the children he had begotten of his concubines, but he began it late and it could not be completed. Three years, however, before his death he made division of his treasures, his money, his garments, and other chattels, in the presence of his friends and of his servants, making them witnesses that after his death the distribution made by him should take effect and be ratified by their assent. What he wished to be done with each portion he set down in an abstract of which the argument and text is as follows:

Description and division made by the most glorious and most pious prince, Charles, emperor, augustus, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ 811, in the forty-third year of his reign in Francia, in the thirty-seventh of his reign in Italy, in the eleventh of his use of the imperial dignity, and in the fourth indiction.

Whereas a pious and prudent consideration urged him to make and with the will of God to complete this division of the valuables and moneys found in his treasury on that day. And whereas the said Charles was most anxious and eager to provide that both the customary distribution of alms which is

duly made by Christians from their possessions should be given by himself from his moneys as is right and befitting, and also that his heirs, having all sense of doubt removed as to what belongs to them, might be able to know clearly and make division among themselves in due appointment without strife or contention. Now this indenture witnesseth his will and purpose that all his goods and chattels, whether of gold or silver or precious stones or royal ornaments, such as can be found on the aforesaid day in his treasury, be divided into three portions, to be again divided, two of them into twenty-one parts, the third portion to be kept entire; the reason of this division of two-thirds of the property into twenty-one parts being because that is recognised to be the number of metropolitan cities in the realm, and of these twenty-one parts one is to be given by his heirs and friends to each metropolis as a gift of alms, the archbishop being at that time at the head of that church to take up the portion granted to his church and divide it with his suffragans in these proportions — one-third to be retained for his own church and the remaining two-thirds to be divided among suffragans. These portions of the first threefold division, twenty-one in number, that being the number of the metropolitan cities,[a] to be separated from one another, and each to be stored distinct in its own depository with the name of the city upon it to which it shall be conveyed.

The names of the metropolitan cities to which this grant of bounty shall be made are: Rome, Ravenna, Milan, Friuli, Gratz, Cologne, Mainz, Juvavia, also called Salzburg; Treves, Sass, Besançon, Lyons, Rouen, Rheims, Arles, Vienne, Moutiers in the Tarantaise, Embrun, Bordeaux, Tours, Borges. And of the one-third portion which is to be kept intact this shall be the distribution, the other two portions being assigned according to the aforementioned division and secured under seal: this third portion to be used for daily requirements as property in no way transferred by disposal from the power of the possessor, and to continue as long as he lives or shall think its possession necessary to him. But after his death or voluntary renunciation of worldly estate, to be divided into four portions. Of these the first to be added to the aforementioned twenty-one portions; the second to be apportioned to his sons and daughters and their children, being divided among them in just and reasonable proportions; the third to be applied to the needy in true Christian fashion, and the fourth likewise as a gift of alms to be delivered to and distributed among the men-servants and maid-servants forming the household of the palace. And moreover it is herein further enjoined that to this one-third portion of the whole, which like the rest consists in silver and gold, shall be added all the vessels and utensils in use in the various departments of the household, whether of brass or iron or other metal, together with all the arms, clothing, and other matter valuable or negligible, to wit, hangings, coverlets, tapestries, hair-cloths, leather work, cushions, and whatever else shall be found in his chests or wardrobes on that day, it being thereby possible to make more numerous divisions of this portion and enable a greater number to share in this distribution of alms.

And moreover it is enjoined that his chapel, by which is meant all that pertains to the service of the church, shall remain whole and unimpaired, both such matter as he himself hath created and gathered together, and also that which descended to him as his father's heir. And whereas there may be found vessels or books or other ornaments which are clearly seen not to have been brought by him into the said chapel, these vessels or books or other ornaments shall be bought at a just valuation, and possessed by any person desiring to acquire them. And with regard to the books, of which he collected a vast number in his library, it is likewise ordained that they

shall be purchased at a just valuation by those desiring to buy them, the money so received to be distributed among the poor. And with regard to three silver tables and a golden one of great size and weight among the rest of his treasures and money, it is willed and decreed as follows: and first the table of square form which bears upon it a plan of the city of Constantinople, together with the rest of the gifts appointed for this purpose, shall be carried to Rome, to the church of St. Peter the apostle; the second table of round form, embellished with an image of the city of Rome, shall be taken to the Episcopal church of Ravenna; and the third, which far surpasses the others in the beauty of its workmanship, and the massiveness of its weight, and is made of three connected discs on which is comprehended, in a configuration most intricate and minute, a plan of the whole world — this, together with the aforesaid table of gold, shall be an increase for the portion to be divided among his heirs and to be distributed in alms.

This disposition and settlement was made and decreed in the presence of those bishops, abbots, and counts who were then able to be witnesses, and their names are as follows:

Bishops: Hildebald, Richulf, Arno, Wolfar, Bernoin, Laidrad, John, Theodulf, Jesse, Haido, Waltgaud.

Abbots: Frederick, Adalung, Angilbert, Irmin.

Counts: Walacho, Meginher, Otulf, Stephen, Unruoch, Burchard, Meginhard, Hatto, Rihwin, Edo, Ercangar, Gerold, Bero, Hildiger, Rocculf.

Louis, the son of Charles, who by divine order succeeded to him, having scrutinised this same abstract, executed all the introductions therein contained with all possible despatch, and with the most loving fidelity, as soon as the king was dead.[b]

So ends the life of Charles the Great as told by his devoted servant and contemporary Einhard. Let us now review the same ground from the standpoint of one of the greatest of modern historians, and see how the figure of the great king and the structure that he reared have grown across the shadow of a thousand years.[a]

### GIESEBRECHT ON CHARLES THE GREAT

Every independent power that still dared to assert itself in the former kingdom of the Merovingians was subdued. In Aquitania a hereditary dukedom still existed, which Pepin had attacked but not conquered; Charles put an end to it. The Bretons had resisted the authority of the Frankish kings for centuries; after a long struggle their resistance was broken. Bavaria still existed as an independent dukedom under the Agilolfinger Tassilo, and even in Pepin's time there had been a dangerous uprising; Tassilo was humbled, and, although he retained his power for some time longer, he owed it only to the personal friendship of Charles and to the intervention of the pope. He finally had to give up and retire to a monastery.

It was a vital question for the new royal house, which had founded its power above all on those parts of the kingdom that had remained German, to put an end to the freedom of the Saxon race. At war with the Frankish kings for centuries and often defeated in bloody battles, the Saxons had nevertheless arisen after every defeat, and in recent years had even gradually extended their dominion in the southwest further towards the land of the Franks. Every uprising against the Frankish royal power found a ready

support in them, the last free German race. In the last years of his life Pepin had been incessantly at war with this people; Charles received the war as an inheritance from his father and was determined to bring it to an end at any price in order to assure royalty and the Christian religion among all Germans for all time. In the conquest of the last free heathen German race he saw the great work of his life.

For half a millennium the internal relations of the Saxons, who had remained in their ancient seats, had undergone no essential change. The ancient popular liberty had maintained itself here against the monarchy, the ancient religion against Christianity, and the customs of the forefathers had been faithfully preserved; the Saxons of that time were still the genuine sons of the Cherusci whom Hermann had led against the Romans. The land was divided into a limited group of districts or counties (*Gaue*), which were governed as in former times by princes (*Gaufürsten*), chosen by the communities to administer justice and lead the army. There was no common head for the entire people, but there was a great annual national assembly, at Marklo on the Weser, to which delegates from the three free estates of the people came from all the districts. Here common affairs were discussed, war and peace decided upon, and leaders (*Herzöge*) chosen when the army was to be led against an enemy of the land. The free men of the nation were divided into three ranks, the nobles (*Edliuge*), who were powerful but not very numerous, the freemen, and the serfs, a numerous class of dependent men who held no property but enjoyed liberty of person. Geographically the Saxons were divided into the Westfalen (Westphalians), on the Sieg, Ruhr, and Lippe and both sides of the Ems; the Enger on both shores of the Weser, as far as the Leine and the Ostfalen (Eastphalians), in the territory extending as far as the Elbe. A further division was formed by the Nordalbinger or "north people" who still remained in possession of the right side of the lower Elbe as far as the Eider, *i.e.*, of those regions in which the Saxon name had first been heard.

It was a great martial and valiant people of unimpaired natural vigour, full of a wild spirit of liberty and of barbaric cunning, against whom Charles now turned his arms. It was also, to be sure, a people without firm unity and strong cohesion and therefore not hard to defeat in separate combats. But all separate victories contributed little to the final decision of the war; district after district must be subdued, one community after another separately annihilated. The war that Charles waged against the Saxons was the same war in which the Romans had once been defeated; it was waged against the same tribes and in the same regions, and it was again a question of subjugating Germanic freedom to the authority of an individual and joining it to a great empire. At the same time the war was now also a fight for the Christian faith. Charles marched to battle with the relics of the saints; missionaries accompanied the march of his warriors.

War was declared against the Saxons at the "field of May" (Maifeld, champ de Mai, formerly Märzfeld, champs de Mars) at Worms in the year 772. The army set out and first took the Ehresburg, the principal stronghold of the Saxons on the Diemel, on the site of the present Stadtberge. Then the sanctuary in the Egge, where the Irminsul stood—a mighty tree trunk which, according to the faith of the Saxons, supported the universe—was destroyed. The entire country as far as the Weser was ravaged with fire and sword. The Saxons dared not meet the warlike Franks in open battle, and as the latter advanced further into the country most of the tribes swore submission and gave hostages to the king. Christian priests at once

[772-777 A.D.]

went through the land and preached, along with Christianity, submission to the Frankish monarchy, but they preached to deaf ears; hardly had Charles left the Saxon boundary when the people rose in mass, retook the Ehresburg, captured the Siegburg on the Ruhr, and overran the territory of Frankish occupation.

In the year 775 Charles had to begin the war anew. He vowed to subdue the "faithless and perjured" nation of the Saxons or destroy them forever. Summoning all the military forces of his kingdom, he invaded Saxony with an enormous army. But again the enemy would nowhere oppose the Franks in open battle; only once the Westphalians, under the lead of Witikind, risked a surprise at night. Amid terrible devastations Charles' army pressed forward to the Oker; the tribes submitted and gave hostages. And still the subjugation of the land was not yet decided. As soon as Charles had left the land the enemy arose again in his rear and recaptured the stronghold of Siegburg.

Then the king returned in 776 with an invincible army. The Saxons immediately gave up all resistance; hardly had Charles reached the source of the Lippe when they promised to accept Christianity and submit; many immediately received baptism. Charles now had fortresses built in Saxony, took up his residence there for some time and held the "field of May" at Paderborn in 777. The nobles and the freemen of the land appeared before the mighty king on this occasion; no voice of opposition was heard, all defiance seemed broken. The Saxons vowed implicit obedience to the commands of the king, and conceded him the right, if they failed in this duty, to deprive them of land and liberty forever. The people received baptism in throngs; Saxony seemed indeed conquered. Only Witikind, in whom dwelt something of the spirit of Hermann, would not bow down to the Frank and sought refuge with the Danish king Siegfried.

Nothing tended more to hinder Charles in assuring his success in Saxony and quickly strengthening his authority there than the wars which, as ally of the pope, he had to carry on simultaneously against the Lombards. Through the divorce of his daughter, King Desiderius had become Charles' most bitter enemy; he had joyfully received the sons of Carloman who had been excluded from the throne, had recognised them as kings of the Franks, and had demanded their anointment from Pope Adrian. But in spite of all Desiderius' efforts to separate the pope from Charles, Adrian remained "hard as adamant"; he did not even waver when Desiderius marched against Rome with an army and took the greater part of the cities that Pepin had bestowed upon the apostolic see. The pope's appeal for help reached Charles in 773 and he did not delay an instant to obey it. The passes of the Alps were poorly defended; Charles made his way through into the plains of Lombardy without material opposition. Here Desiderius refused to give battle in the open field and restricted himself to the defence of his cities, which had to be besieged one by one.

While the Frankish army was engaged in these operations Charles betook himself at Easter, 774, to Rome in order to show himself to the city as its patricius and to renew in person his alliance with the pope. He was received with all the honours that were customary at the entrance of an exarch or a patricius of the Greek emperor. At St. Peter's church the pope came forward to meet him, and to the singing of "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" both walked to the grave of the apostle and prayed together there. Then the Easter festival was celebrated with the greatest pomp, after which Charles not only confirmed his father's gift to the pope but

made additions to it. Charles declared, as his father had done, that he had not made war upon the Lombards to gain gold or silver, land or people, but simply to protect the rights of the holy see and to elevate the Roman church. But if the pope conceived the hope from this that Charles would turn over to St. Peter's all those parts of the Lombard kingdom to which Rome laid claim, according to a promise made by Pepin but never kept, he was doomed to bitter disappointment. For when, after a long siege, Pavia was taken and Desiderius fell into the hands of his enemies, Charles received the homage of the Lombards and called himself thenceforth "king of the Franks and Lombards." Desiderius was sent as a monk to a Frankish monastery.

After he acquired this extensive territory in Italy, Charles' relations with the see of Rome were not entirely free from unpleasantness. He had become the powerful neighbour of the pope, who himself aspired to temporal power here. There was considerable friction; various claims were raised and rejected on both sides. But in the condition of the times it was impossible that this alliance should be dissolved or even weakened. As early as the year 776 it again became apparent how inseparably the interests of the pope were united with the power of the Frankish king. Desiderius' son Adelchis, who had fled to Constantinople, was threatening Italy. He was supported by his brother-in-law Arichis, the proud and still unconquered duke of Benevento; other Lombard dukes were in secret alliance with both. The pope was in no less danger than the Frankish government. Again Charles hastened across the Alps; the threatening danger was quickly crushed by his powerful attitude, and new uprisings were prevented by a reorganisation of all the affairs of the Lombard kingdom. Everywhere except in Spoleto, where the pope laid claim to feudal rights, the ducal power was abolished, the land was divided into counties, the Frankish military and judicial system was introduced, political power was removed from bishops and abbots; in short, the entire constitution of the Frankish monarchy was copied as closely as possible. Four years later, nevertheless, Charles gave the Lombard kingdom a viceroy of its own in his five-year-old son Pepin. Being upon its own peculiar basis, serving a special purpose and continually exposed to the attacks of dangerous enemies, the land seemed to need a separate government.

[The unsuccessful expedition against the Moors in Spain took place at this time, and the absence of Frankish armies on the northern frontier induced the Saxons to rebel again.] They destroyed the newly built churches, the priests were slain, the Franks were driven out and the Frankish territory itself was attacked. Charles at once sent a force of Franks and Alamanni against the Saxons, and in the years 779 and 780 the king himself marched with a mighty army into the seditious land. All the districts submitted anew and promised allegiance and the acceptance of Christianity. But, taught by sad experience, Charles did not trust their promises again and planned means to enforce obedience. Numerous fortresses were built about the country, especially on the Frankish boundary and along the Elbe; strong garrisons in these strongholds confined the Saxons from east and west and really maintained peace for some time. Charles made use of this period to carry out measures designed to break up forever the old heathen cult and the hereditary national freedom. The Frankish military and judicial system was now introduced here, as it had previously been in the Lombard kingdom; the land was divided into counties, the government of which was placed in the hands of Frankish lords or of Saxon nobles who had submitted to Charles. The division of the land into bishoprics was

[780–785 A.D.]

also begun. Christian priests were settled in the country, and the people, when they did not voluntarily accept the teachings of Christ, were forced to baptism, to ecclesiastical life, and the ordering of tithes. In the year 782 the king held a great and brilliant diet at the sources of the Lippe; his rule in Saxony appeared to be as unhampered as in his own house. He was already laying plans to extend his own kingdom beyond Saxony to the east among the Slavic races. It was on an expedition against the Sorbs, who dwelt between the Saale and the Elbe, that the Saxons had for the first time to render the king military service. Apparently the king desired to give the warlike spirit of this people an occupation in a different direction.

The new regulations of Charles cut deep into the very life of the people. The ancient Germanic freedom bled from mortal wounds. Too exhausted to maintain itself longer upright, it nevertheless still possessed sufficient energy to fight convulsively against destruction. Witikind now reappeared among the Saxons and summoned his people to the defence of their ancient faith and hereditary right. All Saxony flew to arms; even the Frisians joined Witikind. A great common determination inspired these last champions of ancient Germanic liberty. Hardly had Charles gone forth when the whole country was in revolt. The priests were slain, the nobles who had submitted to the Franks were exiled, and preparations were made for a life and death struggle. The army sent against the Sorbs had to turn about and march immediately against Witikind and his hordes, but in the Süntel hills near the Weser it suffered a complete defeat, and reinforcements sent forward from the Rhine had difficulty in saving the scanty remnants.

Charles himself, however, was already on the march with a new army, and again resistance seemed to be paralysed upon his appearance in person. Witikind gave up Saxon liberty for lost and fled again to the Danes. As a stern avenger and judge, Charles now called the faithless people to account. He demanded the surrender of the guilty; 4,500 Saxons were delivered into his hands, and he had them all beheaded in one day at Verden, thinking that, in this desperate struggle, liberty, if cut down by one mighty blow, would bleed to death at once.

### *The Final Subjugation of the Saxons*

With fearful earnestness Charles pursued his aim of completely subjugating the Saxons. He thought he had attained it with the bath of blood at Verden. But humbled as the Saxons were by the terrible deed it filled them still more with wrath and thirst for revenge against the Franks. At once the whole land was again under arms, and once more Witikind returned from the Danes. In 783 Charles again had to march with the entire force of his kingdom against the Saxons, who now for the first time opposed him in great open battles. They did so to their ruin; first at Detmold, and then on the Haase near Osnabrück Charles inflicted the most bloody defeats on them. The Saxon youths were slain, the resources of the land began to fail. Without meeting any further special opposition the king marched on, plundering and ravaging, as far as the Elbe. Nevertheless Witikind still maintained the field against him, until in the years 784 and 785 plundering expeditions of Charles exhausted the land's last power of resistance. Then Witikind at the command of the king appeared in the palace at Attigny, made submission, and received baptism. Saxony was now conquered and Christianity and royalty were forced on the people together.

Under penalty of death baptism was required and heathen customs were prohibited. Any injury to a Christian priest, any sedition against the king or disobedience of his commands was declared a capital crime.

For several years the stillness of death reigned in the land of the Saxons, and Charles could begin to think of directing his arms against the Wends beyond the Elbe. In the year 789 he crossed the river easily and conquered all the country as far as the Peene, thus establishing the Frankish rule in the rear of the Saxons. Now and then, indeed, scattered revolts still broke out among the latter people, but they were at once put down with an iron hand and never again became dangerous to Frankish supremacy. The continuance of Christianity was already assured and the country was divided up into bishoprics.

While Charles was extending the boundaries of his kingdom into Wendish territory on the northeast, great conquests had been made in the southeast as well. A series of campaigns against the Avars in the years 790 to 796 finally resulted in their complete subjugation, the extension of the Frankish authority far down the valley of the Danube, and the restoration of Christianity to lands where it had long since died out.

By the might of his arms Charles had doubled the extent of his inherited kingdom, by his indomitable energy he had crushed all opposition within it and given its political and ecclesiastical institutions such a unity as the West had not known since the time of the Romans. From the Pyrenees and the Frisian coast to the eastern plains in the valleys of the Danube, the Elbe, and the Oder, from the Eider to the highest peaks of the Apennines stretched the rule of the Franks, grasped in the hands of a single man to whom not only all temporal authorities in this wide realm were subject, but whom the entire clergy must also unequivocally acknowledge as their head. To all previous centuries it had seemed impossible to bring all the tribes of the interior of Germany under one rule, to bend the stubborn love of liberty of all Germans to the authority of a king. Charles had succeeded, and he had at the same time reunited under his sceptre the most important lands of the Western Roman Empire which had been separated since the latter's fall. The first cities of the ancient empire were in his possession, Rome itself recognised his authority. The struggle, the opposition between Roman and German had, for centuries, been a source of disturbance to the West; this struggle seemed ended, this opposition amicably settled, since German and Roman were now embraced in one empire, received in one church.

### *The Imperial Coronation 800 A.D.*

Thus the Frankish kingdom had been raised by Charles to a position of world power of universal importance. Moreover this truly imperial power had arisen in the West at a time when the Eastern Empire had fallen into the greatest discredit. For it was just at this time that the ambitious Irene, who had conducted the government for some time as regent for her son and had then been deposed, had again usurped power in the most infamous manner.

By revolt against her own child, whom she caused to be blinded, this woman, in opposition to all the traditions of antiquity, gained the imperial title, which she covered with unspeakable shame. Who could blame the papacy if with a single blow it now severed forever the weak bond that still seemed to fetter it to Constantinople? To tell the truth, the bishop of Rome hardly had any choice left him; he was forced to turn his back

upon Constantinople and recognise the Frankish king as his emperor and lord.

The last years of Pope Adrian passed in peace, but his successor began amid storms. When Adrian died at the close of 795 he was succeeded by Leo III, who immediately sent Charles the keys of the sepulchre of St. Peter with the banner of Rome and requested him to send legates to Rome to receive the homage of the inhabitants of the city. The new pope made submission to the Frank for himself and Rome from the beginning. He conceived the rights of the patriciate as having the same extent as though Charles were already emperor; he sought a protector and only too soon needed the help of one. In the spring of 799 fierce party struggles broke out among the Roman nobility; the pope, attacked and maltreated by his enemies, fled from the city and hurried with an appeal for help to Paderborn before the throne of King Charles. Frankish nobles conducted him back to Rome in the autumn and procured him temporary security from his opponents; but without Charles he was even yet in danger. And already the king himself was hastening to Rome; the establishment of the Western Empire was decided.

When Charles, at the Christmas celebration of the year 800, entered the church of St. Peter in the robe of the Roman patricius, the pope placed a golden crown upon his head. The church resounded with the shout of the crowd, "God bless and save Carolus Augustus, crowned of God, the great and pacific emperor of the Romans!" The pope fell at the feet of the Germanic warrior and paid homage to him in the same manner as the bishops of Rome had formerly paid homage to the Roman emperor at Constantinople.

When Charles ascended the imperial throne of Rome an end was reached towards which ambitious German princes had for centuries aspired. The Germans had received from Rome the first impressions of a great political life, and it was under the influence of these impressions that all the Germanic kingdoms have been founded. The greatness of the Roman imperial state, the unity of its efficient armies, the pomp of the imperial court, the majesty of the law were, and remained, the ideal of the Germanic kings. Even when, in the West, the weakened empire of the cæsars had yielded under the impact of Germanic hordes, it nevertheless seemed to the noblest leaders of the latter to be the loftiest object of a mighty prince to restore the ruined structure by his own power and with his own means. But how was this to be accomplished so long as the German races themselves, without internal or external cohesion, weakened and exhausted one another in an almost uninterrupted series of wars, and so long as the leaders ruled over peoples who, with their defiant love of freedom, resisted any constraint of law and any energetic sovereignty? So the Visigoth Atawulf, the Ostrogoth Theodoric, and finally the first Merovingians had had to give up at the very first effort their bold plans of establishing the Western Empire; it was enough that they succeeded in bringing individual portions of the great whole under their sovereignty and forming them into separate kingdoms.

But the first Germanic prince who succeeded in breaking up forever the independence of the communities and in helping the royal authority to the final decisive victory over popular authority, and who proceeded at the same time to unite to his kingdom all the German races that had remained in their ancient seats, and join them again with the Germans who had emigrated and become romanised, also at once took up the idea of the Roman Empire and represented himself as the successor of the old emperors.

Thus for the first time there seemed to be a peaceful settlement of the

long struggle between Rome and the Germans, in which the question involved was less the overthrow of the old-world power than the reception of the German races in the great federation of civilised peoples; less the destruction of the former civilisation than the further dissemination of all the intellectual treasures included in and cherished by the Roman power. It was not as slaves, indeed, conquered by the legions of Rome, that the Germans had been incorporated in the empire; with their arms in their hands they had gained the rights of citizens and of lords of the empire, and when they had filled and transformed everything with the elements of their nature, the free development of events placed the imperial sceptre of the West in the strong right hand of a German prince. So Charles entered upon the government of that great Germanic-Roman empire into which the ancient Roman power had been transformed.

### *Administration and Reforms of Charles.*

But Charles' ambition as emperor, it is certain, was not to revive the despotism of heathen Rome over the world, to call to life again forgotten rights of the ancient emperors and thus establish absolute power for himself. His idea of the new power that came to him as emperor was rather based upon that religious and political conception of the emperorship which the western church had developed in itself. It was rather the theocracy of the old alliance than the despotism of the Roman imperial state that furnished him the maxims which he followed in the administration of the world power intrusted to him. In the circle of his friends Charles was called King David; when compared with his imperial predecessors he must be placed not beside the Julians or the Flavians, but beside Constantine or Theodosius, the founders of the Roman state church. Thus the ideal of the new imperial state is nothing less than the kingdom of God on earth, in which the emperor is appointed by God himself as his lieutenant, in order that he may, in accordance with the divine intentions, guide and govern the people.

It was in this sense that Charles conceived his position; in this sense he began his imperial government. Soon after his return from Rome he had the entire body of ecclesiastical and civil law in force in his dominions revised at Aachen and everything struck out that seemed contrary to the command of God. Then he sent out royal messengers, both ecclesiasts and laymen, in all directions to put these improved laws into force and at the same time to require from all subjects of the empire who had passed their twelfth year a new oath of allegiance, an oath which, as was expressly emphasised, imposed far higher duties towards his imperial majesty than the oath formerly given to the king. To these messengers Charles gave an almost apostolic mission; they were to warn the people zealously against any violation of the divine commands, to enjoin the Christian virtues, to remind all that they must sometime give an account of their lives before the judgment throne of Christ.

Though the Germanic kingdom had from the beginning assumed some ecclesiastical rights, it seems now, when raised to imperial power, to usurp almost the plenitude of the high-priesthood. And Charles was in fact frankly designated the "regent of the holy church"; church councils not only required his permission to meet, he supplemented their decisions, rectified their mistakes, and had everywhere the deciding vote in them. It was he, in no less degree, who reformed the entire clergy of his empire and with unrelenting sternness forced upon them the canonical life whose regulations were for the most part taken from the monastic rules of St. Benedict. The

legislation of Charles encroaches everywhere upon the domain of the church, and even in the later collections of the canon law his laws appear beside the letters of the popes and the decrees of the councils. The pope, although the western church honours him as its spiritual head, sinks beside this high-priestly emperor almost to the rank of first councillor in ecclesiastical affairs, of head of the highest corporate body of the empire.

But it was as king of the Franks, as commander-in-chief and supreme judge of his people that Charles had attained imperial power; out of the military and judicial authority that he exercised over the free Franks and all peoples subject to them his whole power had arisen, and would fall to the ground if this basis upon which it rested should be weakened or withdrawn from it. If the empire of Charles was to maintain its existence it was all-important that the subject portions of the realm should at the same time be so fully incorporated in the Frankish political system that they could never again separate from it — an immeasurable, infinitely difficult task, especially as Charles could never think of forcing the despotism of decrepit Rome upon his empire nor of crushing the characteristic life of the separate races with the weight of his supreme power, of establishing one law and administration and like forms of government from one end of his empire to the other. He was withheld from this in the first place by his ideal of the Christian state, but even more by his own disposition and by the nature of the peoples he ruled over. If the political creation of Charles was to gain any sort of permanence among peoples that were either German throughout, or had at least been internally transformed by Germanic elements, it must proceed from the German spirit, which possesses no creative activity where freedom of development is not permitted to the individual. It must, moreover, cling tenaciously to tradition, and regulate, assemble, and direct the powers of the state more through personal influence than through a lifeless mechanism.

Charles performed this task with a wisdom and greatness of soul that will ever be astonishing. Mighty and successful as are his deeds of arms, his fame as lawgiver nevertheless shines with a far brighter radiance through the history of mankind. Above the personal and national laws, which had in part first been codified by his direction, he established by his capitularies — edicts and enactments which he either promulgated upon his own decision or upon the counsel of the imperial assemblies — a general law of the empire, a body of legislation of the most comprehensive sort, which not only regulated the great affairs of the entire body politic but even descended to local conditions, in order to adjust them to the whole. He carried through in good part the undertaking so long despaired of — of subjugating the defiant, liberty-loving Germanic races to a constitution, of making them serve the ideal of the state. A gigantic step in the development of the German spirit was taken through the legislation of Charles, and it must not be thought that because it was a first and therefore rude and awkward attempt it was born of a barbaric spirit.

If we rightly regard the highest art of the lawgiver as consisting in the ability to perceive with a keen eye every germ of moral life that he meets with in the customs and institutions of his people, and so to care for it that the most beautiful fruit of which it is capable will be obtained from it, then Charles was one of the greatest lawgivers the world has ever seen. No native impulse of the Germanic character was allowed by him to die; every one on the contrary was placed under cultivation, ennobled, and made capable of producing more splendid flowers and more useful fruit. As the Frankish political system in general, aside from its ecclesiastical elements, rested

primarily on a Germanic basis, so too above all it was Germanic elements that were made use of in the political creation of Charles. The content of his laws, aside from the theocratic admixtures, is thoroughly German, although the capitularies as well as the national laws were written in Latin. In a certain sense the entire past of the Germanic nations flows into these laws, their whole future life flows from them. The Romans called the laws of the Twelve Tables the source of their entire political organisation; with equal right the Germans, indeed all the nations of Europe, could say the same of the laws of Charles. With veneration and holy awe one opens the capitularies of the great emperor, which combined form a legislative work that had a fruitful effect upon many centuries. The image of the Carlovingian state is here presented to our eyes with vivid actuality; we see how great things were accomplished and the highest striven for.

The strongest agency in holding the empire together was the Roman Catholic church; it disseminated one faith, one moral law, like religious institutions over nations that had previously been distinct from one another in language, customs, and laws, and enclosed them in its ingenious compact organisation as with a fine-meshed net. Church councils and imperial assemblies generally met together, and in the latter the voice of the clergy possessed the most weighty influence. The bishops were regarded as the most skilful agents in all political negotiations, they enjoyed a respect equal to that of counts. Like the temporal nobles, they were rich landowners, often led their retainers to war in person, and not seldom exchanged the crosier for the sword. Though the clergy had formerly been almost exclusively of Roman origin, now many Germans also devoted themselves to the clerical estate; sermons were preached in the German language, religious books were translated into German. In this way the clergy approached nearer to the peculiar character of the Germanic peoples, but did not on that account serve the universal aims of their estate and of the empire any the less effectively, especially since the compact union of the church had in recent times been rather strengthened than weakened.

A second, if not equally strong bond for the empire, was the Frankish nationality and the political institutions based upon it. With their swords the victorious Franks had gained control of the West, had made themselves rulers of the Germanic and Latin world; the empire, though it called itself Roman, was nevertheless only an extension of the kingdom of the Franks. The Frankish king was the sovereign of the empire; the divisions of the latter, the provinces, districts, and hundreds, or whatever other provincial name they may have borne, were for the most part ruled by Frankish nobles. Everywhere throughout the wide extent of the empire palaces and courts of the Frankish kings, castles and extensive possessions of the Frankish nobles were to be met with. The elements of the Frankish constitution were imposed both upon the conquered German lands and upon subject Italy. The Frankish people penetrated and surrounded the entire West with their political institutions; not strong enough to destroy the other nationalities, they had however attained such power that they could hold them down and make them serviceable to themselves.

As head of the western church and as king of the Franks the emperor was supreme in every way. The bishops, chosen always in accordance with his will, though not often directly by him, almost seemed to be the mere instruments of his designs. And in no less degree the entire civil government of the state proceeds from him. He alone appoints the counts, who in his name administer the military and judicial authority in their counties; their

position is merely that of imperial officials who can be removed or dismissed when the common welfare demands it. He designates the royal messengers who travel annually in pairs through the various divisions of the empire, oversee the officials, receive complaints against them, uphold the rights of the throne in all parts of the monarchy, and maintain a constant communication between the divisions and the emperor. He is himself the supreme judge with unlimited jurisdiction; he has sole jurisdiction over the nobles and can assume all jurisdiction over others. He has the right to call to arms, decides upon war and peace, leads the army in person or appoints a commander-in-chief as well as dukes (*Herzöge*) of the forces of the separate peoples for the duration of the war. Legislation is also essentially vested in his hands, although in it he consults the imperial assembly and his council of state.

The imperial assembly consisted of all the lay and clerical lords, *i.e.*, of the high court officials, the bishops, abbots, dukes, counts (*Grafen*), and the principal men of the royal retinue. It met every spring, usually in connection with the great review of the field of May, and its counsel was asked in all weighty affairs of state or important imperial laws. The council of state, however, was composed only of the high court officials, and the magnates of the empire whom the emperor deemed worthy of special confidence, and summoned to his presence either temporarily or permanently. In the autumn the council of state generally met for especially important sessions which served for the most part as preliminary consultations for the next imperial assembly, and for this purpose was increased by important servants of the emperor from all parts of the empire, and hence might be considered as a sort of imperial assembly in miniature.

The ancient works of art and science had made an impression upon Charles' mind at an early date. He had wandered in Italy among the ruins of the great world gone by, and had decorated his palaces and the new churches in his native land with ancient works of art. It had thus been revealed to him that a peculiar breath of the divine spirit animated art and science, and also out of the German songs, despised by others, there was wafted to him a breath of fresh, vigorous, intellectual life. Charles raised his eyes far above the narrow bounds in which the western church confined art and science, where only the Roman erudition transformed by the clergy according to its own ideas had held its ground; he felt that Christianity carried with it the tendency towards a universal culture of mankind, but he also felt that it ought also to assimilate all the higher intellectual elements which were scattered in the individuality of different nations. Above all he realised, as no one before him, what treasures of mind were stored in his German mother-tongue, and could be elaborated from it. For this reason he gave especial attention to the German language and poetry; he himself worked on the first German grammar, and was the first who caused the German heroic poems to be written down. He held the clergy to preaching in German to the Germans, to instructing them in the German language. Only thus could the foundation for a German national civilisation be laid; since nothing less than the civilisation of the nation as a whole was the end he had in view.

The idea of a general national culture, which only recent times have called to life, and that in a very imperfect manner, was in fact already conceived in the mind of the great emperor. But national culture could proceed only from scholastic culture, although the latter, which had been preserved almost exclusively among the clergy, had long worn a predomi-

nantly theological character. For that reason alone Charles was obliged to nourish and cultivate this theologising scholarship, to which he also attributed the highest value, in all directions. He gathered the first scholars of the day at his court, bringing them not only from Italy but also from England, whither the new Latin science and literature had been transplanted from Rome together with Christianity, and where, invigorated by fresh nourishment, it had put forth new blooms. Charles himself was a most zealous pupil of these men whom he held up as a shining pattern for his clergy, and whose example did indeed have an unusual influence. Even if the emperor's final ends were far from being attained, nevertheless schools began soon to flourish in the episcopal churches and in the cloisters; the Frankish clergy soon became distinguished for its learning, and even the laity was in some degree affected by the new intellectual life. Theological literature again produced works of lasting influence. Latin poetry was diligently cultivated, the German received rules and an artistic development; the art of reliable historical composition which was able to distinguish between fact and fable, and could grasp great events in their true position, grew up then for the first time among the Germans. In all of this almost solely the work of the clergy may be detected, which allowed itself to be directed by the mind of the emperor. He tried to remove the bishops and abbots from all earthly cares, and ordered them to install secular persons as judges and officials, who should execute justice and collect the revenues of the chapters, so that they themselves might follow their spiritual and intellectual calling with undivided force.

But mighty and influential as was the position to which the clerical and civil nobility had attained, the real power of the people still rested in the estate of freemen, which had ever remained the broad foundation of the Germanic political organisation. Only the stubborn force and the simplicity of severe morality that still persisted, especially in the German portions of the Frankish monarchy, had preserved the kingdom of the Merovingians from complete destruction and had made the establishment of royal power possible to the house of Pepin. No one knew better than Charles that the roots of his power lay here and that it would of necessity itself wither and disappear with them. With indefatigable zeal therefore he kept watch that the estate of freemen should neither be diminished nor shorn of its rights. When the magnates were evidently striving to displace the smaller landholders, seize their possessions and thus bring them into a dependent relation, Charles opposed them with the whole force of his authority and strictly forbade all oppression that could be employed to that end. Charles opposed such oppressive drudgery of the free people with unrelenting sternness and regulated by law the services that could be required of the freemen. The poorer men were partially freed from the duty of personal military service, several of them being permitted to combine to equip one of their number. On the outbreak of war, moreover, for the most part only those provinces that were near the scene of the conflict were obliged to furnish their full complement of men.

If, as has been asserted, Charles was the only sovereign of the entire Middle Ages who penetrated to any depth the secrets of political economy, he could not fail to see that the nourishment and support of the state lay in the assured permanence of the middle and lower class landowners. To be sure, at a time when the internal organisation of the state consisted almost exclusively in the administration of justice, Charles could not carry out any great general measures for the elevation of the national welfare; but he

THE CROWNING OF CHARLEMAGNE AT ROME, 800 A.D.

(From the painting by Levy in the Pantheon)

could furnish others an example of how to practise agriculture successfully. And he gave this example to the whole empire. He was the best husbandman in it, his estates were model establishments, he saw to everything personally, looked over all accounts himself; and he even required a report of every wolf killed on his property. In other directions also he showed ways and means of increasing the national wealth. He directed his attention to the industries which, at least in the German provinces, were still carried on only by bondmen; and taught on his estates how they could be engaged in with profit.

He safeguarded trade, which was carried on in the German provinces mostly by Italians and Jews, and opened new routes to it. A highway of commerce joining the Mediterranean and the North Sea extended along the Rhine. Another route led from the mouth of the Elbe to the middle Danube and branched there in one direction towards the Black Sea, in the other towards the Adriatic. The development of an extensive industrial activity out of these foundations of Charles was slow and late; for the moment they were no more successful than those legal enactments of the emperor which forbade the freeman all feud and even self-defence, and commanded him to lay down his arms in time of peace. Mighty though the emperor's arm was, there still existed a remnant of the old personal liberty and impatience of restraint which even he was unable to overcome.

Thus the state of Charlemagne sought to unite in itself all the different elements of political life that had developed in the Christian-Germanic period. In combination they were to supplement and counterbalance, control, and gradually to permeate one another. The clergy and the civil nobility were intended both to support and to watch each other. The officials and the communes extended to one another a helping hand, but at the same time kept each other within bounds. The crown united the whole, but it was none the less actually, if not legally, restricted and bound by the separate elements of the state. A certain balance of powers was established, but its maintenance required great skill and no little expenditure of power. The mighty personality of Charles succeeded in this in good part, but his keen insight did not fail to perceive how strong were the individual interests of the separate estates, and how hard it was for them to adapt themselves to any legally regulated system.

Not everything turned out as he wished and planned. The political institutions of Charles were indeed far from really penetrating the whole extent of his dominions; the ideal that hovered before his spirit in fact came to actual realisation only in his immediate vicinity, at his court. According to the ecclesiastical and temporal character of the empire, the person of the emperor was surrounded by a numerous body of court clergy and a brilliant retinue of temporal nobles. At the head of the ecclesiastical household stood the apocrisiary or arch-chaplain; through his hands all ecclesiastical matters passed to the emperor, and he had also assumed the duties of referendary. Below him was the arch-chancellor, who later himself gained the position of arch-chaplain. The best trained men of affairs, the most worthy servants of the church, the first scholars of the time were among the court clergy, which was the training-school of the bishops of the empire and under whose direction also stood the court school, at that time the most famous educational institution in the entire West. As the court chapel—the entire body of court clergy—was the centre of all ecclesiastical and scientific activity, so too in the supreme court the administration of justice and the science of government reached their height. Here the emperor either presided in per-

son or was represented by the count palatine, who formed the head of the civil nobility and through whose hands all legal matters went to the emperor.

For the direct service of the king's person vassals were appointed who could be looked upon as models of knightly training. At the court of Charles the most distinguished and influential men from all parts of the empire met. No one came into the emperor's presence who could not have found there a fellow-countryman and in him an advocate. Service in the imperial palace was under the strictest regulations; everything was exactly fitted together, in order to be of mutual advantage. The older men received assistance and support from the younger; the latter found precept and example in their elders. So the court was not only a training-school for the clergy, but in no less degree for the nobility. The noble propriety and courtly manners which were later a distinguishing characteristic of knighthood, seemed to have had their beginning at the court of Charles.

Like the stars about the sun the paladins were grouped about the great emperor, who overshadowed them all. Not indeed, through brilliancy and pomp of external appearance did he charm the eyes of those who approached him; but about his tall, dignified figure played a dazzling glory as of some higher light in which the clearness of his great spirit seemed to radiate. Those long, white locks which adorned his head in old age, the great piercing eyes, the calm, serene brow, the powerful figure, aged but still not lacking in grace — this whole picture not only imprinted itself deeply upon his contemporaries, but history and tradition have held fast to it in all times, and to-day there is not a youth who has not received that impression. Many ambitious sovereigns have appeared in the thousand years since his time, but none has striven towards a higher ideal than to be placed beside Charlemagne; with this the boldest conquerors, the wisest pacific princes have contented themselves. The French chivalry of later times glorified Charles as the first knight, German citizens venerated him as the paternal friend of the people, and the most just of judges. The Catholic church placed him among its saints; the poetry of all nations in the succeeding ages has repeatedly received strength and vigour from his mighty appearance. Never perhaps has a richer life proceeded from the activity of a mortal man.

### *Last Years of Charles*

In the last years of his life Charles was less occupied with military enterprises than in the earlier period. He turned over military glory to his sons, Charles, Pepin, and Louis, with whom he associated capable generals as advisers. Pepin, in Italy, had to conduct many a campaign against the armies of the Grecian emperor, Nicephorus, who had dethroned Irene; it was not until 812 that the court of Byzantium recognised Charles as emperor and the boundaries of the Eastern and Western empires were settled. At about the same time, too, the principality of Benevento finally submitted; it remained under Lombard princes, but they had to pay tribute to Charles. In the Alps and the valley of the Danube affairs were more easily and quickly settled after Pepin had destroyed the kingdom of the Avars. The frontier next the Avars, the marks of Corinthia and Friane, gained a firm outline, and the Slavs living within and along these boundaries recognised the sovereignty of the Franks. In 806, Charles, the emperor's oldest son, also made war upon the Bohemians and the Sorbs; they were humbled, and for supervision of them the Frankish mark on the upper Main and the Thuringian mark on the Saale, Gera and Unstrut, were established.

[793–814 A.D.]

More stubborn and dangerous were the wars against the Arabs in the southwest of the empire. The earlier conquests of Charles had been lost again, and in 793 the Arabs had even crossed the Pyrenees and attacked the Frankish dominions. But in 797 a Frankish army, under the command of Louis, again succeeded in penetrating far into Spain, and four years later Barcelona fell. The foundation was laid for the Spanish mark and its extent was gradually increased by a series of successful campaigns. At the same time the small Christian states that had been formed in the northern mountains of the land arose to manful defence against the infidels. The kingdom of Asturia now for the first time gained an assurance of permanency under the brave king Alfonso II. Oviedo was built as a royal city and Compostela arose over the grave of the holy apostle James whose bones had just been miraculously discovered there. The veneration of St. Iago di Compostela and the courage of the chivalrous Alfonso then inflamed the Spanish Christians to further successful undertakings. The deeds of Charles gave the first inspiration for their victories, and Alfonso, who called himself a servant of the emperor, laid his choicest booty at Charles' feet. At the same time the Basques, Pamplona, and all Navarre cut loose from the alliance with the Arabs by making temporary submission to the Franks; and along the Balearic Isles, and on the coasts of Corsica and Sardinia, Frankish fleets were already fighting Arab pirates with some degree of success.

Unquestionably the Frankish arms had proved themselves far superior to the once feared prowess of the Arabs. But the empire was now attacked by new enemies who stormed upon the northern marks with fearful might and wild violence, seeming to gain an access of renewed strength in the heat of battle. These enemies were the Danes. In earlier times they had appeared as friendly and closely related brothers of the German peoples; but Christianity and the compact union of the Frankish kingdom formed a strong dividing wall between the German and the Scandinavian peoples and turned the blood and racial friendship into the bitterest enmity. Unquenchable love of freedom, daring, and heroic courage, inexhaustible natural vigour, wild lust of booty — all that had once made the Germans so fatal to the Roman Empire was turned now with these sons of the northland against the Roman-German sovereignty of Charles and threatened it with all the greater danger since the Danes were skilled in naval as well as land warfare; while the Franks, who had for a long period fought only on land, must first learn to do battle on the unstable element of the waves. With the help of the seafaring Frisians Charles fitted out his first fleets, and as Frankish seamen were already fighting in the Mediterranean to protect the shores of Italy and Gaul from the Arabs, so too Frankish ships were soon seeking to defend the coasts of the North Sea from the attacks of the Norse enemies; but the Franks never became thoroughly familiar with naval warfare.

The wide empire was now protected against the neighbouring lands and peoples by a complete circle of strongly fortified and well defended marks, similar to dykes for the protection of a carefully tilled plain against the rush of wild floods. The Frankish vassals settled everywhere here for the defence of the boundaries formed a standing military force, always on guard against the near enemy and therefore also relieved from all service in other parts of the empire. These vassals, called *Markmannen*, were thus a sort of military colony on conquered ground, and were under their own counts who were clothed with extensive plenary powers and were chosen by the emperor from the bravest warriors among his nobles. These counts were called *Markgrafen* [hence our word marquis].

When Charlemagne felt his end approaching he placed his youngest son Louis, his sole heir after the early death of Charles and Pepin, on the throne beside him and with his own hands set the imperial crown upon his head at Aachen [Aix-la-Chapelle]. Four months later the world mourned the death of the great emperor. On the 28th of January, 814, Charles died in his palace at Aachen, in the seventy-second year of his age and the forty-sixth of his reign.[c]

### THE LEGENDARY CHARLEMAGNE

Scarcely had the great emperor passed away when the sober truth of his achievements took on the tones of the miraculous, and the historic Charles, too great to comprehend as he really was, became the centre for all that wealth of legend which grew into the epic poetry of France. In the year 883 a garrulous old monk in the monastery of St. Gaul on the upper Rhine recorded his version of the invasion of Lombardy, and through his words, which the theme renders eloquent, one can see for the first time the picture of the Charlemagne of the Middle Ages.[a]

#### *The Monk of St. Gall's Story*

With Desiderius (in Pavia) was Otker, one of Karl's great nobles, who had fled the wrath of the dread king some years before and had found refuge with Desiderius. Now on the approach of the terrible Karl, they climbed into a high tower from which they could see in all directions.

The advance guard appeared, stronger than all the armies of Darius or of Cæsar; and Desiderius asked Otker, "Think you Karl is with this great army?" But he replied, "Not yet." Then he saw the van of the army drawn from all parts of the wide empire and he said to Otker, "Surely the conquering Karl is in that host." But Otker said, "Not yet." Then Desiderius, in growing alarm, cried out, "What can we do if still more come with him?" Otker replied, "You will soon behold the manner of his coming; but as for us, I know not what shall befall." And lo, while they yet spoke there appeared, wave after wave, the multitude of his household servants. "That is Karl," cried Desiderius in terror. But Otker said, "Not yet." Then came the bishops and abbots and chaplains and their train, and the dazed and trembling king, stammering with fear, called to Otker, "Let us go down and hide in the earth from the wrath of this terrible foe." But Otker, who in his better days had seen the power of Karl's incomparable arms, answered in dread, "When a harvest of steel comes waving in the fields, and the Po and the Ticino dash waves black with steel against the city wall, then Karl is coming." Scarce had he spoken when in the north and in the west they saw his coming, dark and cloudlike, attended by shadow that eclipsed the clear day. Then as the king drew nigh there came a flash from gleaming weapons that was more awful to the besieged than any night. Then they saw Karl, the man of steel, his arms, his iron breast, his broad shoulders protected by steel harness, his left hand holding aloft the iron lance, his right ready for the victorious sword. Steel filled the fields and roads, and shot back the rays of the sun; the people, paralyzed by fear, did homage to the bristling lances and bared swords.

And all this, which I, a toothless old man have told, stammering and with many words, Otker saw with one swift look, and said to Desiderius, "There is Karl, whom you so long desired to see." And with these words he fell to the ground like one dead.[d]

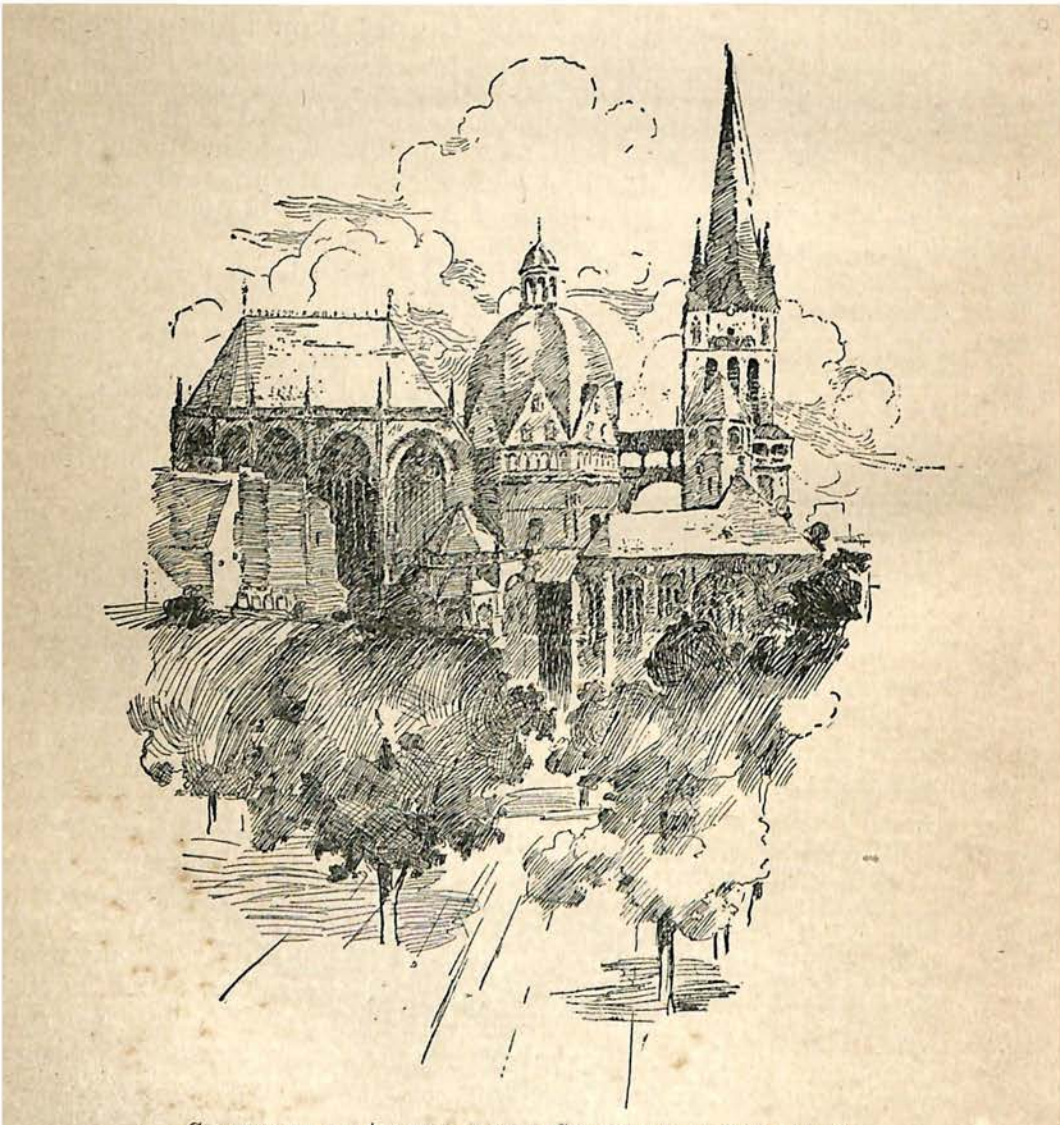
[800–814 A.D.]

*Sheppard's Summary of the Legends*

In any effort of the mind to represent unto itself the personal attributes of the great Carlovingian emperor, it becomes indescribably confused, owing to the double image presented to the vision by the historic and the legendary Charlemagne. To the mediæval imagination, excited by the romantic strains of minnesingers and trouvères, the last was undoubtedly predominant. His mother, whom Villon calls *Berthe aux grans pies* (Bertha of the large feet, the original, perhaps, of the goose-footed queen still known in nursery tales), daughter of the king of Hungary, the betrothed of Pepin, for whom a false Bertha was substituted by the officer intrusted to bring home the royal bride, is as mythical a personage as Deïanira or Ariadne. Her wanderings in the forest; her residence with the good miller of Mans, for whom she spins so gracefully and so patiently; the coming of King Pepin when lost in the chase; his love at first sight for the gentle peasant maid; the gradual *dénouement* of the truth; the punishment of the traitors; the marriage of the lovers, and the birth of Charles, form an introduction to the life of the hero of Carlovingian romance, which removes him at once into the region of the fabulous. And when at last he emerges into the twilight land which lies between the domains of legend and history, he becomes, after the immemorial habit of the myth, the nucleus round which are concreted innumerable traditions of warlike enterprise and religious animosity — the spontaneous products of a time when the instincts which underlie both are in a state of preternatural excitement.

Charlemagne, surrounded by his paladins and "douze pairs," like the British Arthur amid his knights of the Round Table, formed a much more distinct and familiar image in the popular mind, than the great monarch who sat as a real lawgiver in the court of his palace at Aachen. And probably his relations with Harun-al-Rashid, and the actual incidents of the Saracenic wars, were altogether distorted and obscured by the legends of his campaigns in Spain and the Holy Land, to win from the children of Mahoun the sacred relics of Calvary, the crown of thorns, the holy lance, and the nails of the true cross. But it is through this delusive medium that the image of Charlemagne has generally been presented to our modern perceptions. Coloured by the prismatic light of legend, myth, and song, the form of the greatest man of early European times assumes to the gazer's eye a brilliant, but strangely changeful aspect. We fill up, from mingled sources of history and romance, a great though indistinct outline: the vast but well-knit body, the towering stature, the "dome-shaped" skull, the broad, lofty forehead, with the "large quick eye" beneath, the snowy hair and beard which swept his waist, like the blossoming hawthorn or the flowering laurestinus, the giant strength which could cleave a knight in twain at a single blow, from helmet-peak to saddle-bow, his famous sword Joyeuse, with its religious legend engraven on the blade — *Decem præceptorum custos Carolus;* his death-dealing spear, supposed by some to be the very lance which pierced the Saviour's side; his glittering mail of proof; the large robes of otter-skin in which he sat wrapped, while, during the long winter evening, he listened to the *barbara et antiquissima carmina* of his favourite bards, most probably the earliest rhapsodies of the *Nibelungenlied;* his hearty jovial spirit, the outpouring of a great, strong, sensuous nature; his *bonhomie*, developed in practical jokes upon pedants and fools; his strong common sense, his courtesy, his patronage of learning, his feats of strength, his amours, his restless locomotion, his laborious efforts to write, his fatherly

fondness for those beautiful but unworthy daughters whom he could not bear to leave behind, even in his warlike expeditions — all these form a complex portraiture most probably very unlike "the rough, tough, and shaggy old monarch," as Sir F. Palgrave calls him, who had the courage, the energy, and the skill to govern that wild ninth-century world. Yet it may be doubted whether some modern writers have not wandered still further from the original, while they ignore the lapse of a thousand years, and depict a constitutional monarch of modern Europe. "Each generation, or school," says Sir F. Palgrave, with some little exaggeration, "has endeavoured to exhibit him as a normal model of excellence. Courtly Mézeray invests the son of Pepin with the taste of Louis Quatorze; the polished Abbé Velly bestows upon the Frankish emperor the abstract perfection of a dramatic hero. Boulainvilliers, the champion of the noblesse, worships the founder of hereditary feudality; Mably discovers in the *Capitularies* the maxims of popular liberty, Montesquieu the perfect philosophy of legislation." *e*



CATHEDRAL AT AACHEN, WHERE CHARLEMAGNE WAS BURIED

# CHAPTER VI

## CHARLEMAGNE'S SUCCESSORS TO THE TREATY OF VERDUN

[814–843 A.D.]

### LOUIS LE DÉBONNAIRE, OR PIOUS (814–840 A.D.)

CHARLEMAGNE'S successor, Louis le Débonnaire,[1] did not restore vanished prestige by any of his own. We may praise his goodness, his virtue, the purity of his morals, the efforts he made from the beginning of his reign to rid the court of that license which Charlemagne had allowed to enter, and his re-establishment of the necessary discipline among the monks and secular clergy; but he had not the firmness required to maintain authority. From the beginning he showed a deference to the pope that Charlemagne would have felt excessive. He allowed Stephen IV (816) to be elected and take possession of the pontificate without his consent, and was pacified by tardy excuses. When Stephen came to crown him in France, he permitted him to pronounce words which revealed the tendency of the holy see to arrogate to itself the free disposal of the imperial crown: "Peter glorifies himself in making you this present because you assure him the enjoyment of his just rights."

The papacy was already working for its second deliverance, eager to reject the authority of the Western emperors as it had rejected that of the Eastern. If Charlemagne had judged it expedient to divide authority with his sons on account of the extent of the empire, a still stronger necessity existed for Louis le Débonnaire to do the same. But his division of the states, accomplished at the Reichstag held at Aachen in July, 817, did not differ in any respect from that made by Charlemagne, and neither brought imperial unity into doubt or peril. Two subordinate kingdoms — Aquitaine and Bavaria — were created for Pepin and Louis [Ludwig]. Lothair, the eldest son, was associate emperor, or co-regent.[b]

[1 Though the Germans protested violently against gallicising their Karl der Grosse and Ludwig der Fromme into Charlemagne and Louis de Débonnaire, we prefer to keep the more familiar forms.]

Louis did not attribute the appointment of Lothair as co-regent and his own future successor to his own will and choice alone, but also to that of his people. Agobardus[d] does not make any mention of Bernhard and Italy, though, in the records, they have not been entirely omitted. The chronicle narrates that the kingdom of Italy shall stand in the same relation to the empire under his son as it did under his father and himself. The arrangements concerning the two younger sons of the emperor Louis were carefully weighed and considered. Pepin, the elder, received Aquitaine, Gascony, the mark of Toulouse, and a few west-Frankish and Burgundian countries. To the younger, Ludwig, were assigned Boiaria (Bavaria) and Carentania (Carinthia) with the mark of the Slavonic Avars. Each received the title of king, but great stress was laid upon the fact that they were vassals of the emperor, and neither in war nor peace, nor in any foreign relations whatsoever, should the two younger brothers act independently of the elder. Their territories, again, should not be divided up among their descendants; even the voice of their people was essential to the choice of their successors.

We can appreciate the importance of these decisions by comparing them with the ordinance of 806, which actually contemplated the existence of three independent realms bound together by mutual loyalty. The idea of the empire as finally adopted by Charlemagne was thus firmly adhered to. A decision was also arrived at, providing for the maintenance of the empire in the event of the death of Louis without legitimate heirs; one of his brothers was to succeed him, so that primogeniture would have been the result. Louis reserved to himself absolute power over his sons for the term of his natural life.

These imperial resolutions have frequently been interpreted as signifying a division, whereas nothing of the sort was contemplated, for all the rules, as laid down, aimed at the unity of the empire, with the exception of a few concessions made to hereditary rights. They were nothing more nor less than an attempt to co-ordinate the two principles upon which the empire was based, namely unity and the right of succession. The right of inheritance was founded upon long-established custom, as laid down on the death of King Pepin. On the other hand, the empire was the outcome of a political idea, which had arisen since that time, and which constituted the substance of all power. At that moment the idea of unity was predominant.[c]

But these fresh efforts were afterwards ill sustained, and already, by the movement which was agitating the confines of the empire, it was plain that the strong hand of Charlemagne was no longer there. The Northmen redoubled their ravages; the Slavs crossed the Elbe; the Avars rose; the Croats became independent; the duke of Benevento refused tribute; the African Saracens pillaged Corsica and Sardinia; those of Spain invaded Septimania and supported the Gascons in revolt; the Bretons took Morvan as king and invaded Neustria. The Franks, it is true, had the advantage everywhere. Morvan in particular was killed, and Louis made Nomenoé duke of the Bretons.

But soon the disheartening feebleness of the emperor became known. "In 822 he convoked a general assembly at Attigny consisting of the bishops, abbots, and noblemen of his kingdom, and before them all made public confession of his faults and submitted at their pleasure to penance for all he had done, both to his nephew Bernhard or to others." When Theodosius humbled himself before St. Ambrose at Milan he presented a grand spectacle to the world, and rose higher after the public avowal of his faults. Louis' confession at Attigny was less esteemed, and degraded him because from

a political body, an authority rivalling his own, he received absolution. Thenceforth everyone knew how far he could venture with such a man.

His second wife (819) was the beautiful and gifted Judith, the daughter of the Bavarian chief, and by her he had a son whom he named Charles (823). She, with her favourite, Bernhard, duke of Septimania, a skilful and intriguing man, exercised great influence over both emperor and empire. In 829 she prevailed upon her husband to give a portion to the child she had borne him, and finally, in the Diet of Worms (829) he established a kingdom for his son composed of Alamannia, Rætia, part of Burgundy, Provence and Gotha (Septimania and the Spanish marks).

This division greatly enraged the eldest sons of Louis, as they conceived themselves slighted thereby. The partisans of unity, who saw the agreement of 817 compromised, and the nobles joined with the discontented sons in the hope of overthrowing the influence of Judith and Bernhard — an influence which diminished their credit. The revolt broke out in an expedition against the Bretons, to whom Nomenoé had just given independence. Lothair, Pepin of Aquitaine, and Ludwig of Bavaria took arms against their father, made him prisoner and shut him up at Compiègne with the monks hoping that they might induce him to adopt a monastic life. At the same time they sent the empress and her son into a convent (830). The constitution of 817 was re-established. Louis le Débonnaire, however, obtained that the general assembly which was to make statutes for this new state of affairs should be convoked at Nimeguen in the midst of the Germans in whom he trusted. This trust was justified. The Germans outnumbered the Roman Franks and carried the day (830). A wily monk prevented discord among the three brothers, and Louis le Débonnaire, now master once more, confirmed the gift he had made to his fourth son. In 833 he did more, for, weary of Pepin's perpetual intrigues, he took Aquitaine from him and gave it to Charles. This was the signal for a fresh revolt. The emperor's sons marched against him, carrying with them Pope Gregory IV, who had come to France to defend the division of 817. Was Gregory for unity? Yes, but it was for a unity which resulted from the act of 817, that is, for a weak emperor in view of whose weakness religious unity had more strength. The army of Louis and that of his sons met in the plain of Rothfeld, near Colmar in Alsace (833). His soldiers abandoned him without a blow, and this treason gave the spot the name of Lügenfeld, or Field of Lies. The conquerors insulted the age and rank of their father by exposing him to public humiliation.[b]

LOUIS LE DÉBONNAIRE
(From a French print of 1832)

HUMILIATION OF LOUIS

A penance imposed by the church was laid upon the emperor in Soissons, excluding him from the communion of believers, so that he could not retain the reins of government. Although nobody doubted his imperial dignity, yet the emperor was in a sad and melancholy frame of mind. It is narrated that he had been told that his youngest son Charles had been forced to become a monk, and that his consort had not only become a nun, but had already died far away. He was cut off from all society, and the story goes that he had already been persuaded to order the monks surrounding him to say masses for the departed.

Such a situation is doubly painful to the wielder of supreme power, who has often to perceive that the responsibility lies at his own door.

In such desperate isolation was the emperor Louis, when a message from the ecclesiastical synod at Soissons reached him, reminding him of all his transgressions and urging him not to imperil his very soul, seeing that he had forfeited the secular power by the judgment of God and the authority of the church.

Louis begged for time for consideration. When the day he had himself appointed arrived, all the great ecclesiastics of Compiègne proceeded to Soissons to remind him of those acts by which he had offended God, given umbrage to the church, and brought disaster on the people. The emperor listened without contradiction, and declared his readiness to submit to the judgment of the church. At his request Lothair attended with some of his chief adherents, in order to be present at the solemn penance. This painful ordeal took place at the beginning of October, 833, in the church of St. Médard at Soissons, in presence of Lothair and the highest court dignitaries, and of a crowd which filled the church. Louis made a general confession that he had not duly fulfilled the duties of his office and had thereby sinned against God; that he had also set the Christian church at nought, and thereby brought confusion to the people, and that in expiation of these crimes he was ready to submit to public and ecclesiastical penance in order now to receive absolution from those to whom power was given on earth to bind and to absolve.

The ecclesiastical lords were not quite satisfied with this declaration; they required of him an explicit confession of his misdeeds; they gave utterance to their apprehensions that the emperor would return to his former reprehensible conduct as he had done once before, three years ago.

Hereupon Louis in still stronger terms repeated that he had given offence to the church, and that he purposed to be a model penitent; whereat the ecclesiastical lords placed in his hands a list of his offences, the contents of which are readily seen in the three heads — sacrilege, perjury, and murder. It does not appear whether Louis acknowledged the truth of these accusations in detail. Had he done so, the history of his life would present the most repulsive spectacle, and be absolutely incomprehensible.

Whilst speaking, he held the record of his sins in his hands; he then returned it to the ecclesiastics, who laid it upon the altar. He himself divested himself of his weapons and arms and assumed the dress of a penitent. A dark, cheerless scene, symbolising the triumph of the ecclesiastical party over secular interests. How could a prince stand up against a court of justice such as this?

In order to take complete possession of the empire, Lothair repaired to Aachen, where an attempt was again made to induce Louis to enter a

monastery. His answer was decisive; he declared it impossible for him to take the vow so long as he was not free. His disposition is well known; he was docile and yielding, but he doggedly clung to the quintessence of his rights; he possessed the faculty of finding valid excuses, in order to save himself from taking a final step. From the deepest abasement he once more rose triumphant.

## LOUIS RETURNS TO POWER

The vicissitudes of these times furnish a most extraordinary spectacle. The most vital issues at stake; the possession and the government of the empire; the rights of clergy and laity, and the future of the realm in both regards. But those persons principally and actively concerned, the father and his sons, do not display any fixed purpose; they move in opposite directions — the emperor Louis, resolute in the assertion of his rights in general, but at every moment ready to give way in minor details; Lothair, not unmindful of filial duty, but tempted by the unexpected success of his revolt to aspire to despotic power; Ludwig, surnamed the German, as on previous occasions, so also now, not without sympathy for his father, yet all the time scheming how best to maintain and increase the inheritance of which he had taken possession; Pepin, in whose favour the whole movement had been undertaken, not minded to await the course of events, or to renounce direct participation in the sovereign power: he continued to date his documents according to the years of his father's reign, whilst his brother Ludwig was satisfied with mentioning his father in his documents as the augustus and imperator.

In situations such as these, events become more powerful than men; that is to say, general movements become more powerful than individual intentions. At first it became evident that the two younger brothers were not minded to submit to the elder's dictation; they demanded from him better treatment for their father. Lothair intimated to his brothers that it was through them that their father had lost his authority; that he himself was not to be blamed for exercising the rights of seniority; and that his keeping his father, whose misfortunes deeply touched him, a prisoner, was a course of action justified by the judgment of the episcopate. All the formal reasons which were urged by him were not however able to dispel the impression that the father's power had actually been usurped by the son. The whole civilised world became uneasy and disquieted at the sight; and when Pepin and Ludwig began warlike preparations, which could only be intended against Lothair, they were able to count upon the support of the magnates and the people. Not minded to be surprised in Aachen, Lothair collected his forces at Paris (the Roman *Lutetia Parisiorum*), a city which even at that time was the centre of all political and intellectual movements in the West Frankish Empire, and where the first revolt against Louis had been prepared and organised. But even while on his way thither Lothair perceived himself to be threatened by the opposition on the part of one or another magnate; and becoming aware that he would not be able to stand his ground in Paris against the hosts of enemies who were advancing upon him from all sides, and convinced that only in Burgundy would he find a secure citadel, he proceeded thither with his faithful adherents, leaving his father behind him in the monastery of St. Denis.

But meanwhile divergent opinions had spread abroad in Paris. As Louis scrupled to follow the invitation to resume the imperial sway, so long as he

was under the ban of the church, it was an act of the highest significance that all the bishops who were present in the capital repaired to St. Denis to pronounce his absolution. They restored him his arms and the imperial insignia.

Absolved by the ecclesiastics, and supported by the sympathy of the nation, Louis again took possession of the imperial throne; he cordially welcomed his two younger sons who returned to him with their followers, and proceeded to Aachen, where Judith, who in spite of a safe-conduct had had a perilous journey from Italy, joined him. Her son Charles was also there. The emperor lived, as formerly, for the pleasures of the chase and his own private affairs, and all external matters were once more allowed to drift in the same old beaten track. But Lothair was still in the field. He had gained no little prestige from the fact that his relative, Hugo of Matfrid, who had been joined by Lantbert, count of Nantes, had stood his ground when attacked by an imperial force of greater numbers. As Nithard expresses it, they were forced, owing to their small numbers and the danger threatening them, to hold together and defend themselves with the utmost valour. Châlons-sur-Saône, held by Lothair's bitterest enemies, was likewise attacked and taken after a short siege. How powerfully old animosities were aroused may be seen in the fact that Lothair caused the sister of Bernhard of Septimania, who lived in a convent there, to be seized and drowned in the Saône; he wreaked vengeance on the sister for the brother's enmity.

This double victory once more aroused Lothair's hopes of subduing the whole empire. But in view of the danger, the emperor gathered together all his forces to take the field against him. In Langres he once more received the offerings which it was customary to make to the emperor. His son Ludwig joined him with the whole trans-Rhenish army. Pepin also appeared with his array. A numerous and devoted force advanced against Lothair, who, on his side, did not hesitate to move forward against his father and two brothers. The armies met face to face at Calviacus, near Blois. A great and decisive battle appeared to be imminent. But the feeling of comradeship among the troops of both armies, who could not forget that they formed one cohesive force — the "*Heerbann*" — prevented the collision. The soldiers felt a natural repugnance to fight against each other. It was chiefly this feeling of comradeship that had caused the soldiery at Colmar to pass over from the side of the emperor to that of his sons. But in their hearts they had always felt a certain sense of shame at their conduct; they had forsaken their emperor to whom before all others they owed allegiance; they would not again take this burden of guilt upon their shoulders.

All Lothair's attempts to persuade them to a second desertion signally failed. The consciousness that it was the "*Heerbann*" upon which the power of the empire depended, and that a battle could not fail to be disastrous to the common weal, was in reality the controlling factor which here, in a most dangerous crisis, led to a settlement. Lothair, who could not hope for victory without the help of the "*Heerbann*," decided to accept the conditions offered, chief of which was that he should retire to Italy, and leave the remainder of the realm to his father, and interfere no longer. A meeting in the imperial camp was arranged, and Louis, sitting between his two younger sons, received Lothair's allegiance.

This event was decisive; for in order to bind the two younger sons to himself, the father had to make them a secure settlement for their future;

but at the same time they had to submit to an arrangement being made with the youngest son, which they had until then most vehemently opposed. One plan has been preserved to us, according to which a tripartite division of the non-Italian territories of the empire between Pepin, Charles, and Ludwig was projected, and in which the fact strikes us that closely following the arrangement made by Charlemagne, Ludwig was promised the Germanic territories, with however the saving clause that it should be in the emperor's power either to increase or diminish their extent according to the measure of obedience paid him.

### LAST YEARS OF LOUIS

For the moment it was of paramount importance that the authority of the emperor, which had been sorely shaken by the attitude of the clergy, should be restored by a formal agreement with the latter. In a general diet of the empire held at Thionville, the act of excommunication was revoked in due form, and the decree pronounced that Louis should henceforth be faithfully and obediently recognised as emperor. All the ecclesiastics signed this declaration and afterwards proceeded to Metz, where Drogo, the natural brother of the emperor, was bishop, and where the emperor had spent the preceding Christmas, in order to proclaim the renewal of allegiance. Ebbo was also present; he likewise had signed the protocol and was one of the most conspicuous among those who promulgated it. This done, the whole company returned to Thionville and everything seemed to be arranged, when the emperor levelled an indictment against Ebbo himself and new difficulties of general importance arose. The emperor accused Ebbo of having wrested his arms from him by false accusations, of having thrust him out of the church, and deprived him of his realm. Ebbo hesitated to reply to these charges in the emperor's presence, though not from deference or shame; he had to consider his hierarchical status; such a proceeding would run counter to the just claims of a bishop to be judged only by an ecclesiastical tribunal. Moreover, some of the other bishops advised him to avoid further controversy, since it could not fail to be prejudicial to the episcopate and afford occasion for calumny. With their assistance Ebbo drew up a conciliatory document, which he signed and handed to the assembly.

Thereupon the synod pronounced judgment: Ebbo was to cease to discharge the functions of a bishop. Ebbo's adversaries considered his declaration as an authentic and valid form of resignation.

It is a striking fact that this declaration was acted upon and that no successor to Ebbo was appointed. It was considered sufficient to entrust the duties of the office to a presbyter. The resignation was not regarded as sufficiently valid to enable the synod to declare the see vacant. The emperor had negotiations with Pope Gregory IV on the point. Let us record the characteristic features of these events. Manifold claims, extending from the present to the future, were in conflict, and the territorial shape that the great empire should eventually adopt was involved. Everything was in a state of unrest; not only were property and authority constantly changing hands, but the highest principles of government were involved in questions as to whether the emperor could be deposed or not, and whether the clergy could maintain their autonomy under the emperor now restored to power, or whether they must again surrender it. The pope, closely as the matter affected him, hesitated to deliver an opinion on the point. He refused to identify himself

with the excommunication, but from sympathy for the clergy would not endorse the sentence passed by the emperor upon one of his chief adversaries.

As the fundamental doctrine, according to which the clergy could not be cited before a secular tribunal, had initiated the proceedings against the emperor Louis, so it was kept in view at the restoration of the imperial power. The emperor had contrived to have that excommunication declared null and void. He was unable to punish the chief instigator by formal judgment of the court, but he managed to have him deprived of his office. As in the conflict with his sons, so also in his struggle with the bishops, he was able to regard himself as victor. Wala likewise yielded; he had energetically promoted Lothair's submission.

The emperor Louis was permitted to enjoy a few years of peace, during which he was the object of general respect. His chief care was to leave his youngest son an adequate competence. To this son was appointed in the year 837 a realm composed of north German and Roman elements extending from the Weser to the Loire, having Paris for its centre, so that we have four realms to take into account, namely, Germania, Italy, Aquitania, and the territory appointed for Charles, which must properly be regarded as Frankish. The death of Pepin, which took place in December, 838, was, therefore, an event of paramount importance. Neither the emperor nor his magnates were inclined to recognise his sons as his heirs. Lothair, who had not only been promised the reversion of the empire in his own person, but also the participation with Charles in the remaining provinces, was won over to this view. Aquitania was now apportioned to Charles, but with the prospect of a fresh division of the realm to the prejudice of the German Ludwig, whom the emperor wished again to deprive of the trans-Rhenish provinces he had hitherto possessed. The result was a violent dispute between them tending towards a bloody issue.

At this moment, when everything appeared to be culminating in a fresh crisis, Louis the Pious (or Débonnaire) died, on the 20th of June, 840. A striking example of contrast between a great father and a less gifted, though by no means an incapable, son.

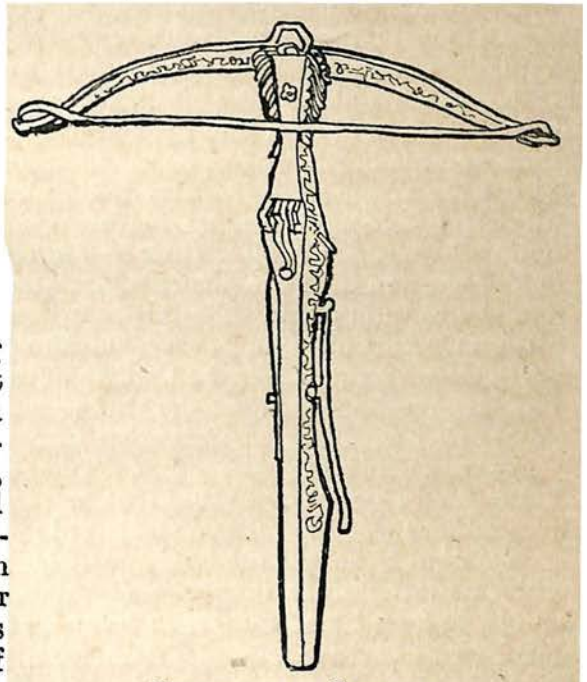
Louis had won his spurs as a sort of viceroy to Charles, and certain merits were his, particularly his conduct with regard to the mark of Spain, though he always acted in dependence upon the higher controlling authority. But the task of independently wielding the supreme power after his father's death was beyond his powers. He lacked the living imagination which alone could weld together divergent elements, and thus maintain the supreme power and secure the existence of the empire for the future. At first he followed the impulses he received from Charlemagne's old advisers, but afterwards was guided by the contrary influences of the second family, with which he had surrounded himself.

So he found himself entangled in the machinations of the factions which were arising around him at the very outset of the conflict. He came into open feud with his nearest relatives, of whom some followed one direction and the others another. It is not probable that he failed through excessive good nature; we have seen how he recoiled from the pressure of hostile elements, calmly bore everything and yielded; but he never yielded in the main point, but awaited the moment when he could reassert his rights. Moreover, he never ceased thinking how to mete out punishment to his enemies; he identified the empire with his own person.

But less important than the secular was the ecclesiastical complication in which he became entangled. By not keeping the arrogance of the secular

magnates within proper limits, he aroused the pretensions of the ecclesiastical hierarchy which, under his rule, reached their full development. They were aimed not only at the existence but at the very idea of empire. And perhaps one might be allowed to say everything happened just as it was bound to happen. The elements that were striving for independence were in existence. Louis was not the man to repel and curb them to their old obedience. In attempting to do so he found that he was the weaker, and he had, consequently, to experience the tortures that disputed authority has to endure in times of faction. He was not able to harmonise the tenure of supreme power with the claims of the right of succession.

The epoch is characterised by the complication of the disputes for succession and an attempt to raise the ecclesiastical power to a position of preponderating prestige in the empire. It is Louis' merit, that neither in one case nor the other did he permit his authority to succumb. He never allowed his jurisdiction over the clergy to be wrested from him, and relying upon the good will of his people always managed to maintain his tenure of the imperium. At his death he bequeathed the insignia of the realm to his eldest son.[c]



NINTH-CENTURY CROSSBOW

### QUARRELS OF HIS SUCCESSORS

It was evident already during the lifetime of Louis the Pious that his sons lived in mutual hatred and jealousy, and could not agree together in harmony. From the first, the sons of the first marriage and their half-brother were on a footing of envy and enmity, dissension also reigned amongst the former because their aims and pursuits mutually clashed. Ludwig, king of Bavaria, afterwards called the German, was both more just and more benevolent in disposition; he had besides the wisest intentions when the empire of Charles I was broken up, for he wished to see the division made on a basis of national principle. But the eldest brother, Lothair, was false and revengeful; and as he was at the same time filled with an inexhaustible egotism, he was bent on excluding his brothers as well as his nephews, by treachery, from all share in the empire, or at any rate on overreaching them to the best of his ability.

Under such circumstances, the most violent friction between the brothers was unavoidable. And this really came to pass immediately after the death of the first Louis. In order to accomplish his ignoble designs, the eldest brother Lothair endeavoured first of all to sow the seeds of discord, in order to overwhelm first one brother by the help of the other, and afterwards his ally. Intent on these designs, he set off across the Alps as soon as he received the news of the death of his father. Then he sent messengers through all the countries of the Frankish Empire to announce that he had

succeeded his father as emperor, and demanding of all his vassals homage and fealty. What rights the emperor held in opposition to the kings no one knew, and Lothair's command that they should swear allegiance to him in the former capacity was the best means of puzzling the vassals and of gaining them over afterwards to his side. The mighty knew as little of justice in those days as in many subsequent periods; the might of the strongest was their law, and the vassals had been accustomed, more especially during the civil wars of Louis I's time, to go over first to one party and then to the other, in utter contempt of their oath of fealty, according to the favours or frowns of fortune. Lothair had undertaken his progress across the Alps at the head of a considerable army, and as he, on his arrival in Gaul, was thought to be the stronger, on account of the weakening of his younger brother Charles through war with his nephew, many of the vassals in France ranged themselves on the side of the emperor. Promises were not wanting, and soon he stood at the head of a powerful faction.

His most dangerous rival was Ludwig the German; and in order first to annihilate him, Lothair endeavoured to persuade his half-brother Charles to become his ally. To this end, he promised the latter to respect the partition which his father had made during his lifetime. Believing that he had thus won his brother over, he set forth from Worms at the head of his army across the Rhine and drew near to Frankfort-on-Main. Ludwig had fortified himself beforehand against his brother, and had tried more especially to unite all Germans in opposition to Lothair. But great confusion prevailed in Germany in both the domains of world-policy and of politics in which the nation was interested. The Germans regarded the Frankish kings with a certain amount of indifference; and thus, more especially with regard to the north Germans, it concerned Ludwig quite as much as his brother to organise a serious resistance among the true Germans. They could not see why they should side with this brother or with that, as the quarrel seemed to be only a matter of private advantage. Therefore when Lothair had crossed the Rhine, Ludwig invested Frankfort, and was resolved to oppose the advance of his brother; yet the lukewarm attitude of the people made him anxious, and he was glad to accept the overtures which Lothair made. Both were irresolute, and therefore it was easily agreed to defer the decision. Lothair sought to gain time in order to entangle his half-brother Charles still more deeply, and Ludwig wished for a cessation of hostilities in order to work up public spirit in Germany to take a warmer interest in his cause. The emperor was actually successful in coming to an agreement with Charles; and when he felt the ground safe on that side, he resolved to make a more serious attack on Ludwig. Early in the year 841 he marched with a strong army to cross the Rhine for the second time, after having by various promises made a bid for the favour of the Germans. Ludwig's efforts in the same direction for the reasons given had not met with particular success; the superiority in arms was on Lothair's side, and Ludwig was therefore forced to retreat before him.

### CHARLES THE BALD AND LUDWIG THE GERMAN UNITE

This turn in the fortunes of war was very dangerous to Germany's interests; for a decisive victory for Lothair would only have prolonged the unnatural conditions of a Frankish universal empire and would have postponed still further, amid the greatest complications, the separation of the national states. Fortunately, however, Louis' youngest son, Charles

surnamed the Bald, brought about a favourable change in the situation, for his distrust of his eldest brother was awakened betimes and caused him to take the offensive against him. Charles was able to win over the sympathies of many vassals in Aquitania, and supported by them he seized Paris. This *coup* compelled Lothair to return to France, and thus to give Ludwig a free hand again. At the same time both Charles the Bald and Ludwig the German obtained a keener and clearer insight into their true interests. They both perceived that the one might found a French and the other a German empire without clashing with each other, and that their common foe was their eldest brother. The latter was furthermore plotting, under the cloak of the imperial dignity, to maintain the empire of Charles I in its entirety, and to revive that unfortunate combination of the most heterogeneous nations. Ludwig thereupon proposed to his half-brother to enter into an alliance with him, which the latter gladly accepted. Ludwig then resolved to cross the Rhine and to join forces with Charles, in order to force Lothair to a partition of the empire in accordance with the principle of homogeneous nationalities.

The junction was duly effected in 841, and the two brothers emphatically gave the emperor to understand that he must either consent to fulfil their just demands with regard to the above-mentioned partition, or else prepare to decide the matter by the force of arms. In the meanwhile, however, Lothair had succeeded in winning over to his side his nephew, Pepin of Aquitania, whom Charles the Bald had unjustly tried to dispossess. In order to gain time to effect a junction with Pepin's army, he opened negotiations with Charles and Ludwig, which resulted in the conclusion of an armistice. The opposing armies were already drawn up close at hand; for Lothair had marched towards Auxerre, where Charles and Ludwig were encamped, to meet his nephew Pepin. During the armistice the junction of the fighting forces of Lothair and Pepin was effected, whereupon the former immediately broke off the negotiations and accepted the battle which the brothers proffered as an ordeal.

The decisive battle was fought at Fontenailles on June 25, 841. On the right wing of the allied army of Charles and Ludwig stood the Germans, and opposing them the emperor Lothair. It was there that hostilities commenced; the fight was obstinate, but the troops of Lothair were decidedly beaten by the Germans. The nephew Pepin held his position better on the right wing, but after the defeat of Lothair the Germans pressed Pepin hard, and he also was forced to yield. Charles the Bald and Ludwig the German had therefore won a complete victory. This was a most fortunate occurrence for the people, but it would have been still more favourable had they known how to make use of their victory. Here, however, they failed; for Charles and Ludwig, instead of pursuing the remnants of the defeated army and by energetic measures extorting a lasting peace, followed the advice of the clergy and commanded that the next three days should be devoted to fasting and prayer, in order to obtain counsel from heaven as to the next move to be made.

Lothair escaped to Aachen and Pepin to Aquitania. This necessitated the division of the victorious forces, for Ludwig withdrew to the right bank of the Rhine to protect Germany against Lothair, and Charles to Aquitania to uphold it against Pepin. As soon as he arrived at Aachen, Lothair resolved to adopt other means to carry through his plans.

The Saxons had made no attempt during the reign of Louis the Pious to detach themselves from the empire, and to re-establish their original constitution. The reason for this is probably to be sought in the lenient measures

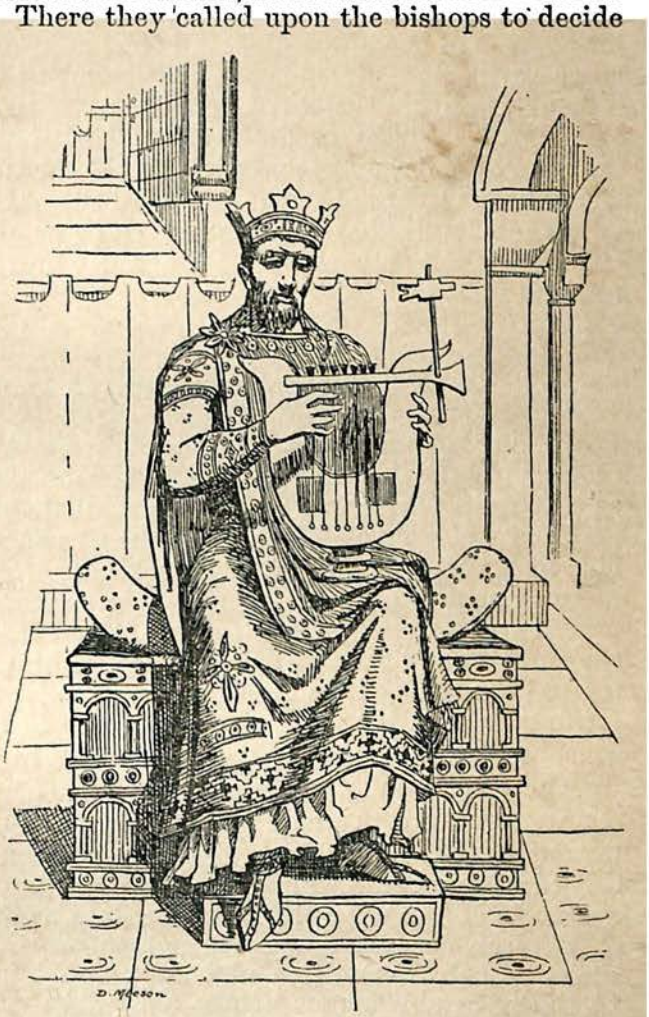
adopted against them by Louis I, for otherwise his weak government would seem to us to have afforded the most favourable opportunity of throwing off the Frankish domination. But the bitterness which had prevailed among the north Germans on account of the mighty oppression of Charles I had by no means vanished, but was on the contrary still tolerably widespread. The cunning Lothair made use of this circumstance to gain the Saxons over to his party. Under the condition that they should help him against his brother Ludwig, he promised to restore to them their ancient constitution. The nobles in Saxony were divided into two factions, adhering either to Lothair's or Ludwig the German's cause. Then Lothair turned to the freemen and villeins, who in proportion to the nobility naturally formed the majority; they listened to his suggestions. Freedom, in the sense in which it is generally used by modern historians, could not be granted by re-establishing the ancient constitution of Saxony, for in olden times there was no freedom among the Germans. But anger at the tithes with which Charles I had more especially burdened the Saxon villeins, the oppression of the officials appointed by the Frankish king, hatred of Christianity which was regarded as the cause of both, and the abuse of their constitutional rights finally induced the Saxon freemen and villeins to accept the perfidious proposals of Lothair. Had the rebellion now being planned been successful, the separation of north from south Germany would have been suddenly effected, and the establishment of the unity of the German Empire thereby long deferred. The alliance of the Saxons with Lothair was therefore in the highest degree injurious to patriotic aims. In order further to strengthen his might, the emperor endeavoured to win over the Normans also, and ignobly promised to allow them to plunder various countries if they would come to his assistance.

Trusting in all these allies Lothair now determined to attack his brother Ludwig, and gathered together an army near Worms. Charles the Bald shrewdly recognised the danger of the situation, and advanced with his forces to the Rhine to support Ludwig. Lothair was thereby constrained to alter his tactics, and to force Charles to retreat before leading his army to oppose Ludwig. He therefore marched into the interior of Gaul. Charles thereupon retreated upon Paris where he entrenched. Lothair determined nevertheless to attack him, but he failed to cross the Seine owing to the rise of the river. After a renewal of peace negotiations, which were once more fruitless, between the two brothers, Lothair marched to meet his nephew Pepin in order again to join forces with him. This he succeeded in doing farther up the Seine at Sens. Charles the Bald proceeded hastily in the meanwhile to join Ludwig the German near the Rhine, which Ludwig had already reached. The two armies effected their junction at Strasburg in February, 842. From this time the brothers firmly resolved to put an end to all hesitation and to the aimless wandering hither and thither, and to bring the matter to a head. They mutually swore an oath of loyalty and indissolubility in the presence of their armies. Ludwig then addressed the assembled warriors, recounting the wrongs they had endured at the hands of Lothair and asserting his fixed determination to conclude an honourable alliance with Charles, absolving his men from their allegiance to him should he break his oath. At that time the national separation of the French and the Germans was already very marked; for Ludwig made his speech in German, repeating it in the Romance tongue in order that Charles' warriors also should understand it. Hereupon the two kings and their armies swore a solemn oath of mutual loyalty and support.

### LOTHAIR BROUGHT TO TERMS (842 A.D.)

The camp was then broken up in order to bring on the crisis at once. Lothair had now returned from Gaul to Aachen, whither his adversaries marched with their armies. He endeavoured to entrench on the banks of the Moselle and to oppose the passage of the enemy, but his dispositions for the defence were miserably weak. The forces of Ludwig and Charles crossed the river without the slightest difficulty, and Lothair so lost his head as to take to flight hastily, never halting until he reached Lyons.

The victorious brothers proceeded to Aachen, which was still considered as the seat of the whole empire. There they called upon the bishops to decide between them and Lothair; which they were only too ready to do, declaring that Lothair had grievously offended against both church and state, and had besides shown himself to be quite incapable of governing the empire, which should therefore pass over to Ludwig and Charles. As the might of the strongest was thus confirmed by moral authority, Lothair began to be seized at last with anxiety and seriously tried to come to an agreement with his brothers. He therefore made proposals to them with regard to the partition of the empire, which seemed reasonable and led to further negotiations. It was impossible, however, owing to Lothair's new subterfuges, to effect a reconciliation at once; but in June, 842, the three brothers held a meeting on the island of Ansilla on the Saône, where they mutually took a solemn oath of peace, and arranged to meet again on October 1st of the same year in Metz, when the division of the empire should irrevocably be made by a tribunal of 120 arbitrators, of which each of the brothers was to select forty from his most distinguished men. This agreement is known as the Treaty of Ansilla, and it was the forerunner of the Treaty of Verdun.



A KING OF THE NINTH CENTURY
(From an old print)

The three brothers were all anxious to make the utmost use of the interval which must elapse before the virtual conclusion of peace, in consolidating their own power. Lothair, as revengeful and cruel as he was craven, vented his rage, on his return to Aachen, on those of his vassals who according

to him were responsible for the disaster on the Moselle, by confiscating many fiefs. Charles, on the other hand, tried to ruin his nephew Pepin in Aquitania, although the latter, supposing any right of inheritance over states to have existed, would have possessed a better right than the uncle. The third brother resolved to put down the rising in Saxony which threatened to become a danger to Germany. There is, it is true, no historical evidence that the Saxon freemen and villeins had lent any actual assistance to Lothair, the instigator of the insurrection; but on the other hand, they proceeded all the more vigorously at home to reorganise their established religion and constitution. Consequently they expelled not only the Christian priests but also many nobles; more particularly those who had been aware of the hopelessness of the enterprise and who would not join the movement. It is possible that in the course of events a freer tendency had been evolved, and that the improvement of the position of the middle classes, and more especially of the villeins or peasants, was the object of their endeavours. For many centuries this numerous class, so oppressed by the Germans, had borne their misery without any attempt to escape it; and yet it was inevitable that by degrees even those of them who were without rights should awake to a consciousness of their unworthy position, and should feel a wish to improve it.

### OPPRESSION OF THE SAXON FREEMEN

During the reign of Louis the Pious there had already been a dangerous rising of serfs in Flanders and in the northern maritime countries, which according to the custom of lords paramount was not put down by justice — that is, by an acknowledgment of the human rights possessed by the miserable oppressed, called in law parlance beasts, and by a lenient and reasonable improvement of their lot — but by the sword.

As a prototype of Napoleon, who held the municipalities responsible for the individual actions which displeased him, Ludwig or rather his council treated the lords of the serfs in the same way in order to guard against similar uprisings in the future. The owner of the villein who took part in a conspiracy was threatened with the king's ban (60 *solidi*).

These facts must be taken as a sign of the times. They show that a longing for freedom was beginning to stir in the bosom of the villein who was without civil rights, and the movement in Saxony might have taken this direction too, as already observed; but this was no struggle for the restoration of an alleged former freedom, as the newer historians would have it, but the opposite — an attempt to overthrow the tyranny of the olden times. Such a condition of things would have stood in direct opposition to the re-establishment of the old Saxon constitution, which certainly was included in the plot, because that government upheld serfdom; yet the Saxons included therein the ancestral religion, their independence from the Franks, and exemption from tithes, and therefore in that sense the struggle for freedom was compatible with the re-establishment of the ancient constitution. It was customary in the peasant rebellions in Germany to adopt a particular name, such as the *bundschuh*, "lace-shoe." The Saxon freemen and villeins called their rising the *stellinga*. When a rebellion has for its goal the acquisition of liberty, it is only natural that a king should tremble; but whether this was really the case here or whether it was the natural dislike of all Germans for the Carlovingian dynasty, that had

oppressed not only the Saxons and Frisians but also the Alamanni and the Bavarians, it is certain that Ludwig feared the spread of the Saxon rising over Swabia and Bavaria, and strained every nerve to subdue it. In order to accomplish this he made use of such cruel means that his name, like that of his grandfather Charles, deserves to be branded by history.

Even had the Saxons endangered the national aims of Germany by their enterprise, and had Ludwig therefore had just claims to be held blameless on that account for trying to put down the movement, yet it must never be forgotten that the Saxons had been provoked by the most abominable regulations, tithes, and other burdens unknown until that day, and that they had been most cruelly wounded in all that they considered holy. As, in addition, the Saxon freemen and villeins had been instigated to rebel by a monarch who called himself emperor, and who according to existing state treaties was to exercise lordship over his brothers, justice imperiously demanded that the people who had been thus misled should be treated with leniency; and that their resentment should be by degrees allayed by relieving the burdens imposed upon them and by just treatment. Instead of proceeding thus humanely, Ludwig made use of his power like a cowardly despot, in order to inflict indescribable tortures on the wretched Saxons. One hundred and forty men were beheaded, fourteen hanged on the gallows, and others, according to ancient custom of the Romans, were mutilated to render them incapable of fighting again. The inhumanity was carried to such a pitch, so the chroniclers affirm, that the number of mutilated Saxons was so great they could not be counted. In this way was quiet restored in Saxony, but it was the quiet of the grave and of silent execration which followed the callous destroyer, a true grandson of the "great" Charles.

## THE TREATY OF VERDUN (843 A.D.)

In the meanwhile the time had come when, according to the Treaty of Ansilla, the court of arbitration was to decide on the partition of the empire. Charles and Ludwig therefore set forth at the beginning of October to meet Lothair at Metz. Neither, however, trusted the other, wherefore Ludwig and Charles kept an army in readiness near Worms, while Lothair brought his to within eight hours of Metz. This caused a renewed tension between the brothers; at last it was decided that the arbitrators of both factions, for whose safety Ludwig and Charles feared on account of the proximity of the hostile army, should meet in Coblenz. The preliminaries for the partition were at once begun there; but it soon became evident that the arbitrators hardly knew the geographical position of the countries they had to divide, much less their relative sizes and the characteristics of their internal conditions. There arose, therefore, on both sides recriminations and complaints, then anger, fury, and a fresh rupture. The discord assumed such proportions that it was feared the negotiations would be broken off and war become inevitable. The condition of the people was so wretched that public opinion, that of the nobles at least, began gradually emphatically to demand patching up of these unholy quarrels. Gaul had been devastated by military campaigns, and as a natural consequence was overrun with bands of robbers. To add to the misery, scarcity of crops had caused a food famine, and finally news came that the *stellinga* in Saxony, rendered desperate by Ludwig's cruelty, had taken up arms again after his departure. Taking all these circumstances into consideration, the most distinguished men of all factions declared

resolutely and by common consent to the kings that the conclusion of a definite lasting peace was of the most urgent necessity, and that if the negotiations were again broken off they would not participate in any new war.

At the same time it was proposed, in order to overcome all obstacles to the partition, that the authorised representatives or arbitrators should immediately travel over the length and breadth of the empire, in order to acquire the necessary knowledge for the division of the same; and also that an armistice of suitable duration should be concluded to facilitate the preparations for the real conclusion of peace. The force of circumstances obliged the kings to yield; the proposed commission was undertaken in common, the armistice was extended till July, 843, and another meeting for the conclusion of peace was fixed for that year.

CHARLES THE BALD
(From a French print of 1832)

While the arbitrators were journeying through the countries that were to be divided, Ludwig returned once again to Saxony, in order to subdue the renewed rising. The *stellinga* made a brave resistance, but the superior might of the king was bound to conquer, and callous cruelty again disgraced the weapons of the blood-thirsty despot.

In July 843 representatives of the three brothers met at last at Verdun, in order to negotiate for peace. And it was there that the final treaty was really signed in August of the same year. Its chief provisions were: (1) Charles the Bald received Gaul and a part of Germany, which lies between the mouth of the Schelde and its source on the left bank, and thence to the Maas. The boundary of his kingdom stretched thence to the Saône, and along the Rhone to its embouchure in the Mediterranean. (2) Ludwig received all the German countries on the right bank of the Rhine and on the left Speier, Worms, and Mainz, with the districts appertaining thereto. (3) Lothair remained in possession of the title of emperor and of all lands outside Italy which lie between the realms of Charles the Bald and Ludwig. That was the essence of the famous Treaty of Verdun, which was the foundation of the final establishment of the pure German nation and of the unity of the empire.

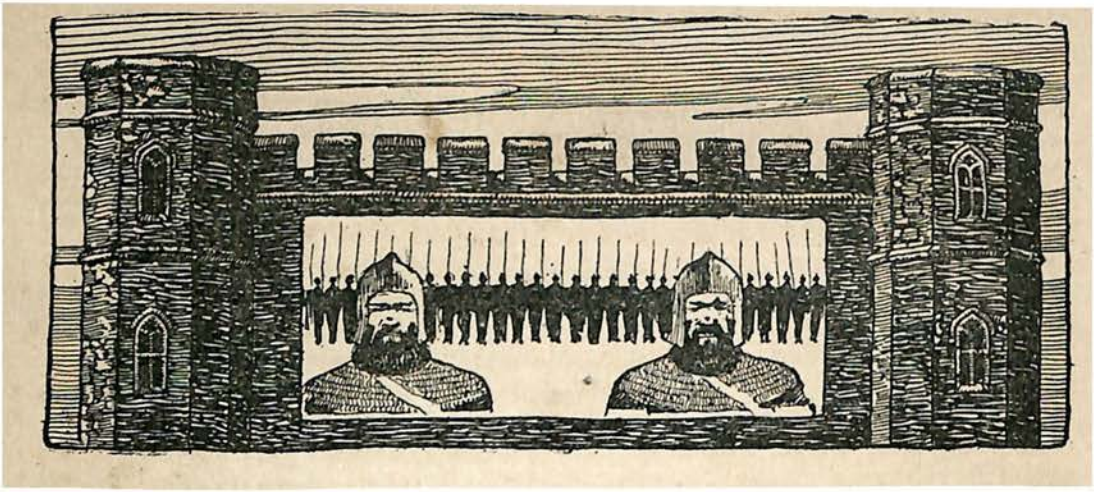
As to the value of the treaty, it is at once evident that it was far from adequate from the point of view of the interest of the people, and was only an expedient of necessity, which the conflicting private interests of the kings had called into existence. The elimination of all independent nations, and the organised union of all the houses of each race into one state was the greatest need of that period; but by the Treaty of Verdun, Germany remained divided up, for the greatest parts of the Rhine district and Belgium were severed from it.

In the same way the boundary question in the interior of the country between Germans and the Slavs remained unsettled, and the demarcation of the nation was therefore once more obliterated. The principal cause of this regrettable evil was the unfortunate idea of the imperial dignity which was to encompass the whole of Christendom. Lothair showed himself so violently possessed by the idea of this dignity that he would not under any circumstances give it up. Aachen was the capital of the emperor, and Lothair insisted so obstinately on retaining possession of the city that, willingly or unwillingly, a strip of land from the German realm had to be conceded to him. Under those circumstances there was no alternative between a new war and the dismemberment of Germany. Under the prevailing conditions the former was neither feasible nor desirable; moreover at that time national spirit showed itself in many of the greatest men to be practically non-existent, and consequently to them the organic unity of the nations was of little account—if they recognised it at all. It was therefore not considered that the dismemberment of Germany was any very great sacrifice to offer on the altar of peace.

And yet, however unsatisfactory the treaty of Verdun was for German interests, it must be conceded that in view of the existing situation even the partial union of the Germans into a separate empire of their own was an incalculable advantage. The union of north and south Germany, enforced by Charles I, could bear no fruits because the independent national development was stunted by the enforced alliance of the Germans with Romans, Gauls, and Italians. By the Treaty of Verdun the Germans, on the other hand, were separated from the Guelfs, and even if important purely Germanic stock was cut off, yet the majority still remained combined in one independent state free to develop according to the hereditary spirit.

Finally the empire given to Lothair by the dismemberment of Germany was so contrary to all common sense in its situation and boundaries, that a continuation of this singular arrangement was beyond the range of probability. Lothair's possessions outside Italy were separated from his principal realm by the Alps; there was absolutely nothing in common between the Italians and the Germans, and at the same time Lothair's portion on this side of the Alps only consisted of an extremely narrow strip towards the sea, which nowhere offered a suitable protection. Part of this strip of land was inhabited by romanised Germans or Guelfs, and the remaining and greater part by pure Teutons; consequently it was only to be expected that the Guelf portion would struggle to become united to France and the Teutonic to the mother country. This is what actually came to pass later; and therefore in the Treaty of Verdun were to be found the elements for the establishment of a national Teutonic empire and unity. We therefore now look upon that treaty as the foundation of both.[e]

Germany dates her national existence from the Treaty of Verdun. Eastern or Teutonic was then forever separated from Western or Latin France, which in later times gained exclusive possession of the name, the heart of the Frankish dominions being known as Franconia. The oaths taken respectively by the armies of Ludwig and Charles show that the two languages were already distinct. The Frankish conquerors of Gaul were largely latinised by intercourse with the former subjects of the cæsars; and while the soldiers of Ludwig swore allegiance in old German, the oath of Charles' army bore an almost equal resemblance to Latin, Provençal, and modern French. The Teutonic and Roman elements in European society and speech were from that moment separate.[f]



## CHAPTER VII

## THE BIRTH OF GERMAN NATIONALITY

[843–936 A.D.]

ALTHOUGH by the Treaty of Verdun the empire remained in some measure united and the emperor had a certain pre-eminence over the king, he was certainly not endowed with supreme prerogatives; the districts were as distinct from each other as they once were in the divisions of the Merovingians. The idea of imperial theocracy was gone, the customary arrangement of succession of the Frankish monarchy had prevailed. This victory was rife with consequences for the Frankish kingdom and all the races ruled by the Franks.

Although it was not the interests of the people but those of the rulers which had led to the Treaty of Verdun, it was of great importance for the evolution and cultivation of nationality in the West. Whilst Ludwig's kingdom almost entirely consisted of German lands, Charles on the other side had those parts of Gaul already permeated by the Roman character; and out of the great German Roman Empire in the East Frankish kingdom there arose a state whose people, albeit separated in clans, were similar in language, customs, and thought, and their connection began to be shown in their language.

In contradistinction to the Roman language of the learned clergy and the Romanised tongue of their southern and western neighbours, they called this language German, *i.e.*, the "popular" tongue, and they called themselves the German-speaking to distinguish themselves from the Romans.

The feeling of their union must necessarily have increased as they were united in one kingdom and were separated by the bond of the kingdom from other races. In like manner the Frankish Roman nationality was more notably evolved in the West Frankish kingdom, after the union with the purely German races was dissolved.

The Germans therefore, like the French, and not without reason, regard the Treaty of Verdun as the birth-hour of their nationality. After the breaking up of the Carlovingian kingdom, the natural differences of the various races did not reappear with their narrow, sharp distinctions, but they began to form fresh nationalities upon a wider and more universal basis,

and this fact was productive of the most important results. There was much to cause the delay of the further separation of the East and West Frankish kingdom. The political elements which Charles had united in his kingdom were by no means equally distributed over all districts, and they had not gained the same force everywhere. The feudal system had especially gained ground on Gallic soil and there attained to such power that the freedom of the lower classes was quite stifled; all the lower circles of the population were dependent on the powerful feudal princes. The great vassals thereby became so strong that they soon instituted the hereditariness of their fiefs, and the king only retained real power over the crown possessions, having elsewhere only the rights of a chief feudal lord. The royal power such as had been exercised by the Merovingians and the first Carlovingians diminished more and more, and royalty was only instituted here later, on quite a fresh basis.

It was different in the East Frankish kingdom. The freedom of the communities had there taken root too deeply to be so easily displaced; vassaldom only gradually gained ground and mostly only because the royal feudal people were introduced to the people as officials. There was therefore far more strength and union in the government; the king was still the people's king and he could call directly upon the fighting power of the masses. This was chiefly why Ludwig the German was superior to Charles the Bald and also to Lothair. In almost the same way, Lothair's kingdom consisted of German and Roman districts without any national unity; it was therefore weak and unstable, albeit the chief lands of the government and the first cities of the kingdom belonged to him.[b]

## The Reign of Ludwig the German (843–876 A.D.)

Ludwig's[1] independent sovereignty commenced at a moment of great national disaster. In the year 845 King Horik of Denmark, who had a large fleet of Norse pirate vessels at his disposal, commenced a general attack upon all the maritime provinces of the Frankish Empire. One division of his fleet, amounting, it is said, to six hundred ships, sailed up the mouth of the Elbe and made an unexpected assault upon Hamburg, the seat of missionary activity in the Scandinavian north. The city was taken and burned to the ground before the local levies (Heerbann) could hasten from the surrounding country to its aid. Many of the inhabitants fell by the Northmen's swords, the rest were scattered or perished as they fled. Bishop Anskar sought refuge for himself and his books and relics in the desolate moorland between the Elbe and Weser. Another detachment of the Norman fleet wrought hideous havoc in the kingdom of the West Franks; Paris was committed to the flames and most of its inhabitants slaughtered by the Northmen. King Charles the Bald went so far as to collect an army, but he did not dare to confront the invaders; indeed, he was well content to procure the withdrawal of the pirates — who dreaded the vengeance of the patron saints of the churches they had plundered and burned far more than the Frankish *arrière-ban* — by the payment of a considerable sum of money. The Northmen carried home with them from their raid a deadly pestilence, to which King Horik himself succumbed after grievous suffering. Before his death he sent an embassy to Ludwig the German to entreat his pardon

[1 The form "Louis" is very commonly met with, but we prefer the German.]

for the destruction of Hamburg, at the same time promising to restore the prisoners and booty.

The Northmen repeated their incursion no later than the following year. They respected the dominions of Ludwig the German, but ravaged the whole coast of western France as far as Bordeaux. The Saracens pillaged the coasts of Italy at the same time; it seemed as though the Norman pirate excursions had emboldened them to similar enterprises. From Africa their fleet sailed to Rome and took the city on the right bank of the Tiber, including the church of St. Peter. They then marched into south Italy, pillaging and slaughtering as they went. On the return voyage a storm at sea sent part of the fleet to the bottom of the Mediterranean, and the Christian world saw the avenging hand of God in their destruction. On the other hand, it was keenly alive to the shame of knowing that Rome and other famous holy places had fallen into the hands of the infidels.

## WAR WITH THE SLAVONIC TRIBES

At this time King Ludwig was engaged in war with the Slavonic tribes. As early as the year 845 he had not been able to keep the Abodrites in subjection except by force. At the beginning of 846 he conquered a Slavonic tribe on the Elbe which we cannot more closely identify, and then took the field against the Moravians, whose duke, Moimir, was suspected of contemplating rebellion. Ludwig deposed the duke, and nominated his nephew Ratislaw as his successor. On his return march the king took the way through Bohemia, where, in mountainous ground and the depths of the forest, he found himself suddenly assailed by the Czechs, and the German army suffered severely before it could escape from the ambush. Immediately afterwards the Bohemians, who up to this time had been nominally subject to Frankish dominion, proceeded to open hostilities against the kingdom of the East Franks, and Ludwig consequently found himself under the necessity of undertaking a great expedition against them in the year 849. He himself was prevented by sickness from taking part in the campaign, and was obliged to send his army into the field under the leadership of several counts who were at variance among themselves. These commanders, after gaining some slight preliminary advantages, suffered heavy loss in men amongst the forests of Bohemia, and were actually compelled to give hostages to the Bohemians to insure their own return home unmolested. This occurrence aroused the profoundest indignation among the East Frank people, who had hitherto gloried in their military reputation above all things.

Since neither of the three kingdoms had any lack of enemies, the three brothers determined to maintain friendly sentiments towards each other and to make common cause for defence against their foes, adjusting their own small differences at a diet of princes (Fürstentag) to be held at short intervals. They met thus for the first time at Diedenheim in 844, then in 847 at Mersen on the Maas [Meuse], and at Mersen again in 851. With them appeared their great vassals, temporal and spiritual. The brothers swore to assist one another with counsel and deed against their enemies, and they directed that their mutual agreement should be put on record and made known among their subjects. But unhappily this act of brotherly concord was deficient in honest purpose, for each one was silently watching and suspecting the others, as though they had been his worst enemies.

### LUDWIG TURNS AGAINST CHARLES THE BALD (853–860 A.D.)

Up to this time Ludwig had remained the most loyal of the three to this friendly compact; but in the year 853 he allowed his greed of territory to seduce him into an act of treachery towards Charles the Bald. The Aquitanians, who had long struggled under the leadership of Pepin — son of a brother of the three kings who had died young — against union with the dominions of Charles the Bald, appealed to King Ludwig for aid after the death of their prince, proposing that he should either become their king himself or send one of his sons. The war with the Slavs was assuming ever vaster proportions, and Ludwig was unable to quit Germany. He therefore despatched his second son, Ludwig the Younger, with an army to Aquitaine. Charles the Bald was hard pressed by the Northmen at that time, and could only spare a small force to oppose the German troops. But the expedition of the German monarch's son to Aquitaine was not the success he had anticipated. Only a fraction of the nobility took his part; another party adhered to the son of their late ruler; others, again, held with Charles the Bald. The whole attempt came to nothing. Ludwig was constrained to seek safety in a retreat which bore a strong resemblance to flight. The Aquitanians returned to their allegiance to Charles the Bald when he had set his son, who was still a minor, over them as king, and thus assured their country of a certain degree of independence.

The year 855 summoned King Ludwig to fresh martial enterprises. The Moravians had become restless and menaced the eastern regions of the kingdom with invasion. Ludwig undertook an expedition against Ratislaw, their prince, but without effect, for the enemy took refuge in secure fortified places behind lofty ramparts of earth. After the king had withdrawn the Moravians pressed forward into Germany along the right bank of the Danube, pillaging as they came. Ludwig could do little to protect this part of the country, as the Slavs were stirring again in the northeast. In the succeeding years he had to undertake various small expeditions against the Daleminzians, who dwelt between the Elbe and Mulde, and the Czechs of Bohemia. The results were in most cases inconsiderable, but even in these minor campaigns the German losses in fighting men were heavy. The greatest danger with which Ludwig was at that time menaced loomed from the east. The whole Slavonic world was in a ferment, and strove to gain breathing-space by pressing westwards.

Under these circumstances we cannot but be surprised that Ludwig thought the moment propitious for extensive military operations against Charles the Bald. In the kingdom of the West Franks, a terrible state of things prevailed, for not only did the Northmen ravage the most fertile regions — especially the lowlands of the Loire — almost every year, but in the interior of the kingdom the insubordinate nobles were at war with one another and with the king. The malcontents of the western kingdom had repeatedly turned their eyes towards the German king. When, therefore, in the year 858, he received an appeal from many persons of consequence in the kingdom of Charles the Bald to deliver them from the king's tyranny and to protect their country from the incursions of the heathen, Ludwig gave up the idea of a campaign against the Slavs, for which he had already made preparations, and marched his army to the west, veiling his dastardly breach of the peace under many fine phrases. The emperor Lothair had died a short time before, and the intervening kingdom of Lorraine had de-

scended to his son, Lothair II, a young and incapable ruler, and Ludwig had therefore good reason to hope that he might be able to reunite the major part of the dominions of Charlemagne under his own sceptre. He advanced with his forces as far as Orleans while Charles the Bald and his nephew Lothair were engaged in a joint struggle with the Normans on the banks of the Loire. Imagining himself already in secure possession of the western kingdom, the king dismissed the greater part of his army, which according to ancient custom, could demand to return home after three months service in the field. Then the temper of the people suddenly changed. The bulk of the Austrasian clergy had remained loyal to Charles the Bald, the temporal lords were ill pleased to see that Ludwig governed the country with a strong hand, and the soldiers of his army had been guilty of the grave error of allowing themselves to perpetrate acts of violence against the country folk. Ludwig suddenly found himself deserted by the Austrasian nobles, disaffection was rife about him on every side, while troops of vassals were gathering round his brother Charles. Suspecting treachery everywhere, he took his departure with all possible speed, having reaped nothing from the whole campaign beyond a considerable loss of prestige. After protracted negotiations a peace was ultimately concluded between Charles and Ludwig at Coblenz in 860. The latter was forced to rest content with being spared a public humiliation and with the grant of a pardon to the Austrasian nobles who had done homage to him.

### THE END OF LOTHAIR

From the year 860 onwards the affairs of Lorraine occupied the foreground of political attention for both the German and Austrasian kings. In 855 the emperor Lothair died in the monastery of Prüm, into which he had retired sick and world-weary. His unfilial conduct towards his father appears to have weighed heavily upon his spirit and estranged the hearts of others from him to such an extent that he never afterwards throve in men's esteem. In accordance with ancient Frankish usage his three sons divided amongst them the dominions he had left. Italy and the imperial dignity fell to Ludwig II,[1] the Rhone provinces to Charles, who was yet a minor, and the most important share, Lorraine (Lotharingia) proper and Friesland, to Lothair II. From the time that he was little more than a boy the young king, Lothair, had lived with his father's connivance in a sort of marriage relation with a lady of rank, Waldrada by name, who had borne him several sons. After his father's death he took to wife, not the love of his youth, but Thietberga, the daughter of a distinguished Burgundian noble whose possessions lay in the Alpine valleys between Italy and the kingdom of the West Franks. There was no issue of the marriage, and the king conceived the desire to rid himself of his consort that he might marry Waldrada and so secure the kingdom to his children. With this object he caused all sorts of scandalous rumours to be disseminated about Thietberga, implying that before her marriage she had lived in incestuous intercourse with her own brother.

The time-serving clergy of Lorraine, with Archbishop Thietgand of Treves and Günther of Cologne at their head, were venal enough to grant a divorce on the ground of these calumnious reports at a synod held at Aachen in the year 860, and to condemn the queen to do penance in a

[1 *i.e.* Emperor Ludwig II; Louis le Débonnaire being the emperor Ludwig I.]

[860–869 A.D.]

nunnery. Lothair thereupon celebrated his nuptials with Waldrada with great pomp. But both his uncles, Charles the Bald and Ludwig were adverse to the divorce, because if Lothair left no legitimate issue they would be the heirs to his kingdom. At the instigation of Charles the Bald Hincmar, the learned and disputatious archbishop of Rheims, published a pamphlet exposing the whole tissue of falsehoods which had been invented to Thietberga's disadvantage and vehemently impugning the proceedings of the synod of Aachen. The unhappy queen escaped from her nunnery and threw herself upon the protection of Charles; she also appealed to the pope for help. The papal chair was at that time occupied by Nicholas II, a mighty prince of the church, who gladly embraced the opportunity thus offered of summoning a king before his judgment-seat. He sent legates to Lorraine to inquire into the king's matrimonial affairs at a Frankish synod. But the legates were not proof against bribery, and at a synod at Metz in the year 863 they pronounced in favour of the king.

CHARLES THE BALD

Nicholas, learning of the corruptibility of his agents, condemned the conclusions of the synod of Metz in a Lateran synod and deposed the archbishops of Treves and Cologne. A lengthy and repulsive controversy on the subject of the royal divorce ensued in Lorraine, finding an echo even in the chambers where the women sat spinning. Lothair was forced to bow to the pope's will, and his consort Thietberga returned to his court. But he presently began to live with Waldrada again, although he could not procure the church's sanction to a divorce and a marriage with his mistress. This scandalous quarrel, which kept the mind of all the western world in a state of agitation, was still dragging its length along when Nicholas II died in 867. Lothair hoped that he might gain his end with the new pope Adrian II, and with the object in view he undertook a journey to Italy in 869. At his interview with the pope he swore, to the horror of all pious souls, an oath notoriously false, declaring that in recent years he had avoided all commerce with Waldrada. But the new pope, who held the king in profound contempt on account of his corrupt morals, also refused to grant the divorce, and could be brought to promise no more than that he would inquire into the matter once again in a synod which he would summon to meet at Rome. Lothair died of a raging fever on his homeward way, and his devout contemporaries saw in his death the divine judgment on his crime. His children were not recognised by the law, and his dominions therefore passed to the other monarchs who were of kin to him. His brother, the emperor Ludwig II, was childless, so that Ludwig the German and Charles the Bald were the only heirs whom it was necessary to take into account.

### LUDWIG AND CHARLES DIVIDE LOTHAIR'S POSSESSIONS (870 A.D.)

At the time of Lothair's unlooked for decease the king of the East Franks was engaged in a war against the Slavs. His eldest son, Carloman [or Carlmann], had for years been warring on Ratislaw, prince of Moravia, and had gained some successes. The Czechs also frequently made excursions into Bavaria at this period, carrying the inhabitants of the country away into captivity. Ludwig therefore resolved to attack the Czechs all along the line in one great campaign. In the August of 869 his armies were equipped and ready to march against the foe. His second son, Ludwig the Younger, was to attack the Sorbs, he himself in concert with his son Carloman was to reduce the Moravians to subjection once more. At this juncture he suddenly fell sick of a serious malady at Ratisbon; and his third son, Charles, as yet untried in arms, led the army to join Carloman in his stead. The war was conducted with success at all points. The Sorbs were compelled to submit. The German warriors attacked the Moravians behind their apparently impassable earthworks, burned many places to the ground, and returned home laden with spoil.

Meanwhile, Charles the Bald was making haste to take possession of Lothair's dominions. He had been busy with defensive measures against the Norman pirates, when the news of his nephew's death was brought to him. The emperor Ludwig II, Lothair's brother, was far away and his forces were insignificant, and the reports of Ludwig's illness sounded so unfavourable that there seemed no chance of his recovery; so that Charles the Bald hoped that he might succeed in making himself Lothair's sole heir. He hurried to Metz, where he had himself crowned king of Lorraine, and thence proceeded to Aachen to receive the homage of the nobles. Very few of the nobles, however, presented themselves. He then ventured to encroach upon the kingdom of the East Franks, for he took possession of Alsace, which Lothair had previously ceded to Ludwig in return for the assurance of his support in his matrimonial quarrel.

But Charles the Bald was not destined long to enjoy his bloodless victory; for Ludwig recovered and threatened him with war unless he consented to a fraternal division of the dominions left by Lothair. Thus came about the famous partition treaty, which was concluded at Mersen in the year 870. By this treaty one-half of Lorraine fell to the western kingdom, and the other to the eastern. The boundary line ran southwards from the mouth of the Maas [Meuse], following the course of the river for some distance until it reached Ourthe, then crossed to the middle Moselle, just touched upon the Marne, and then ran along the Saône to the level of the Lake of Geneva. Thus, east Lorraine, Alsace, and north Burgundy, passed to Germany. The Treaty of Mersen was a corollary to the Treaty of Verdun; all the purely Germanic elements of the population were now combined with the eastern kingdom, and the way was prepared for the formation of two great states and nations, the one Germanic and the other Romance.

### LAST YEARS OF LUDWIG THE GERMAN

In the latter years of his life, King Ludwig was afflicted by the same misfortune which he and his brothers had conspired to bring upon their father; for his grown-up sons rebelled against him. He had early conferred upon them a share in the sovereignty of parts of his dominions, and after his

kingdom had been considerably aggrandised by the Treaty of Mersen, they demanded a corresponding extension of their dominions. Carloman, the eldest, ruled Bavaria almost as an independent kingdom, and therefore received a considerable accession of territory. The younger sons, Ludwig and Charles, felt themselves aggrieved by this proceeding, and refused to render obedience to their father any longer. This occurrence took place at an unpropitious time for the king, as the Moravian prince, Suatopluk, had just inflicted a crushing defeat upon a Bavarian contingent. Under these circumstances Ludwig endeavoured to come to a compromise with his sons. In a diet at Forchheim they were reconciled to him, on condition that they should all share equally in the heritage of Lorraine. Thereupon a great expedition against the Moravians was undertaken in 872. But fortune did not favour the Germans. A detachment of Saxons, at variance among themselves, was worsted in battle and turned back in shameful rout, and another army, under the command of Bishop Arno of Würzburg, came back with heavy loss and without having accomplished its object. Carloman was attacked in the rear by the Moravians, and forced to beat a retreat with heavy loss. The king himself was unable to take part in the war, being busy with the affairs of Italy.

A grievous domestic trouble was soon added to these military reverses. His two younger sons conceived the criminal design of dethroning their father, and holding him in captivity. The project came to light as by a miracle. Charles, burdened with an evil conscience, was seized with a fit of the epileptic disease from which he suffered, and betrayed part of his secret, probably during the convulsions. According to the ideas of the time, it was believed that the devil had entered into him, and he was taken to church, where the clergy tried to cure him by prayers and exorcisms. The sight of his brother's ravings wrought such an effect on the mind of Ludwig the Younger that, stricken with remorse, he confessed their design to his father. The king refrained from punishing his sons; he was reconciled to them again, and left his dispositions for the succession unaltered. Grown wise by such experiences, he thenceforth granted his sons a fuller measure of independence in their subordinate dominions.

About the end of Ludwig's reign a peace was concluded with the Danes, to his great satisfaction. After King Horik's death his two sons declared their willingness to enter into a compact with Ludwig, whom they were prepared to honour as a father, to the effect that the Eider should constitute the boundary between the two kingdoms, and that the two nations should thenceforward live in peaceful intercourse with one another. On this basis a peace was concluded, greatly to the benefit of missionary enterprise in particular. The archiepiscopal see of Hamburg and Bremen was at that time governed by Rimbert, a pupil of Anskar's, who worked in complete harmony with the spirit of his predecessor. He endured the hardships of many sea-voyages, labouring to spread Christianity among the Danes and Swedes.

In the following year the long war with the Moravians was also brought to a close. A Moravian embassy appeared at Forchheim in 874 to sue for peace. Prince Suatopluk undertook to render fealty to the king of Germany and to pay a regular annual tribute. From a German province Moravia thus became a feudal state under German suzerainty, an alteration which must be reckoned almost as a defeat for Ludwig.

In the last year of Ludwig's life an event took place to which he had latterly devoted his whole attention. The Italian emperor Ludwig II died and left no heir, and the throne of the Roman Empire thus fell vacant. Both Ludwig

and Charles the Bald laid claim to this dignity. Engelberga, the widow of the deceased monarch, favoured the German king, who had made an agreement with her at Trent in 872 to the effect that his eldest son Carloman should be the successor of Ludwig II; Pope John VIII, on the contrary, wished to confer the succession upon Charles the Bald. When the news of Ludwig II's death reached Rome the pope immediately despatched an embassy to the king of the West Franks and invited him to come and be crowned emperor. On the other hand a convocation of Lombard nobles, at which the Empress Engelberga was present, declared in favour of the king of Germany.

Charles the Bald outwitted his rival by the celerity of his action, for no more than four weeks after he had received the tidings of the emperor's death he and his army stood upon Italian soil. But his way to Rome was barred by the sons of Ludwig, for Charles was in Italy at the time, and Carloman hurried thither from Bavaria with an army. By gross imposture, however, Charles the Bald contrived to render his opponents harmless; he concluded a compact with Carloman, according to which they were both to leave Italy, taking their armies with them, and the fate of that country was then to be decided by amicable agreement between the two kings. When Carloman, relying on this compact, had withdrawn from Italy, Charles the Bald hastened to Rome and there received the imperial crown from the pope in return for lavish gifts and promises. This clumsy fraud so enraged Ludwig the German that he undertook an expedition against the kingdom of the West Franks, not with a view to the conquest of the country but in order to compel his brother to come back from Italy and make a fair arrangement with him. But the old king himself was summoned home by mournful tidings; his wife Imma, the loyal companion of so many years, had died after protracted suffering, and her death plunged him into profound dejection. He nevertheless determined to await his brother's return and then march against him with his sons at the head of a well-found army. But the projected expedition never came to pass, for Ludwig died soon after, in August, 876. The momentous question whether the imperial dignity and the sovereignty of Italy should pass to the kingdom of the West Franks or that of the East Franks thus remained undecided.

In retrospect the total result of the reign of Ludwig the German is seen to be not unfavourable. Amidst severe struggles he maintained his dominions intact at almost every point, and secured a valuable accession of territory from those left by Lothair II. Moreover the first vehement onslaught of the Slavonic races on the eastern division of the Frankish Empire had been successfully repulsed.

### THE SONS OF LUDWIG THE GERMAN; CHARLES THE FAT (876–887 A.D.)

After the death of Ludwig his three sons undertook the government conjointly. Carloman regarded Bavaria as his proper heritage, and hoped to win Italy and the imperial crown into the bargain. Charles the Fat reigned in Swabia, and Ludwig the Younger ruled over the northern provinces of the kingdom. This tripartite division was agreed upon by the three brothers at a meeting at Riess, but it had hardly time to take effect, for the assaults of foes from without and other grave disasters followed in such rapid succession that they were fully employed in remedying immediate evils.

No sooner did Charles the Bald receive the welcome tidings of his brother's death than he made ready to rob his East Frankish nephews;

[876-877 A.D.]

he was eager to seize upon the whole of the dominions left by Lothair II, and to gain possession of the intervening kingdom of Lorraine as well as of the imperial crown. Though his own country was at this time suffering grievously at the hands of the Northmen, he led his army into Lorraine and occupied the important cities of Cologne and Aachen. But he had mistaken the character of Ludwig the younger, who was one of the last vigorous offshoots of the mighty Carlovingian breed, a valiant soldier and a sagacious leader. Charles allowed Ludwig to decoy him into giving battle under disadvantageous conditions at Andernach, and suffered a severe defeat, in which the greater part of the West Frankish army was put to the sword and many nobles were taken prisoners or robbed of their costly robes and jewels. Many of them were obliged to return home without even their weapons, and their cowardly king saved himself by shameful flight.

After Charles the Bald had come back to his kingdom the Norman pest began anew. The pirates could only be induced to withdraw by the payment of a huge sum of money, which Charles levied upon the whole country under the name of the Norman Tax (*Normannensteuer*). Soon afterwards an urgent appeal for help reached him from Italy, from the pope, who was suffering at one and the same time under the oppression of the Saracens and of the Italian nobles. The latter were at permanent feud with him, and did not even respect the churches and the consecrated vessels. Charles was not profoundly touched by the pope's entreaties, but he was keenly alive to the fear that some Italian noble might set the imperial crown upon his own head, and therefore, in spite of the desperate state of his own country, he resolved to make a fresh military expedition into Italy. In the summer of 877 he held a convocation of lords temporal and spiritual at Quierzy, to take counsel with them on the subject of the Roman expedition. Most of them tried to dissuade him from it, urging the miseries under which his own kingdom was suffering; but Charles, nevertheless, started for Italy at the head of an army.

Pope John VIII, who had but shortly before confirmed Charles' election to the imperial dignity at a synod held at Ravenna, hastened to Pavia to meet him. There they were also met by the alarming news that King Carloman had come in haste with an army from the kingdom of the East Franks, and was already in upper Italy. The feeble monarch's timorous spirit made him welcome the further tidings which came from his own country, to the effect that the nobles whom he had left behind in the kingdom of the West Franks were conspiring against him. He hurried back to his own dominions in hot haste, without waiting to confront his adversary; and the pope had to go home with his purpose unachieved.

Death overtook the West Frankish monarch suddenly as he was crossing the Alps. The rumour ran that Zedekiah, his Jewish physician in ordinary, had poisoned him with a powder administered as medicine. Despised by all and loved by none, the king departed this life in the forty-sixth year of his age, a man wholly vile, as his contemporaries said, and one whom the annalist of Fulda[c] calls "timorous as a hare."

## LUDWIG THE YOUNGER

Carloman meanwhile remained in upper Italy. When the news of the death of Charles the Bald reached him he addressed a letter to the pope, requesting him to bestow upon him the imperial dignity in return for the

customary promises. Negotiations on the subject had nearly come to their conclusion when an infectious malady broke out among the German forces and Carloman fell a victim to it. The army had to retreat hastily across the Alps, carrying their sick king in a litter. This admirable prince was not destined to recover. Like all the sons of Ludwig the German, he had a tendency to brain disease and paralysis, inherited probably from their mother Imma. From this time forward he lived on one of his estates at Oetting in Bavaria. Later the unhappy man was smitten with a paralytic stroke which deprived him of the power of speech and motion. He died in the autumn of 880, after languishing for three years in a condition which rendered him incapable of discharging any of the functions of government. There was no issue of his marriage, but he had an illegitimate son, the offspring of a liaison with a lady of rank, upon whom he had conferred the Mark of Carinthia during his illness. All his contemporaries agree in describing Carloman as a prince of great valour and exceptional ability, and the decline of his powers in the prime of life as a great misfortune for the empire.

A WEST FRANK

From the year 877 onwards Ludwig the Younger, second son of Ludwig the German, reigned practically alone, and ruled with great vigour and sagacity. He first came to a good understanding with the kingdom of the West Franks, where a son of Charles the Bald, Louis the Stammerer, had ascended the throne. The weak health of the latter prevented him from conducting the war in person, and he therefore endeavoured to come to terms with the eastern kingdom. For this purpose he met Ludwig the Younger at Fouron in the north of Lorraine, and in an interview at that place ratified the treaty concluded with the king of the East Franks at Mersen in 870 and resigned all pretensions to the imperial dignity. Almost immediately after the king of the West Franks fell ill of a grievous malady, of which he died in the following year, leaving as heirs to his kingdom two sons still under age. Hence the ambitious King Ludwig the Younger readily conceived the idea of winning the Austrasian crown for himself and so uniting all the dominions of Charlemagne once more under his own sceptre. The same idea suggested itself to many a West Frankish noble. The influential abbot Gauzlin of St. Germains and Count Conrad of Paris tried to convince their fellow-countrymen that Ludwig the Younger, whose prowess in the battle of Andernach was still held in the liveliest remembrance, ought to be chosen king. A large number of nobles, having arrived in council at a resolution to this effect, sent messengers to invite Ludwig to take possession of the country. He replied by entering it at the head of an army, but failed to find favour in the eyes of the people because he allowed his soldiers to pillage as ruthlessly as the Normans had done. There was another party among the Austrasian nobles, who desired to preserve the

crown to the sons of Louis the Stammerer. They therefore offered Ludwig the Younger compensation in the form of the western part of Lorraine, which had fallen to the share of the western kingdom in the Treaty of Mersen. He acquiesced in this arrangement, and the crown was conferred on Louis and Carloman, the sons of Louis the Stammerer, conjointly. But the misery of the western kingdom was only just beginning. Boson, the ambitious count of Provence, son-in-law of the emperor Ludwig II, rebelled and exalted his county into an independent kingdom, and an important part of the monarchy was thus lost. And, to add evil to evil, the Normans renewed their pirate incursions.

After the conclusion of the treaty Ludwig the Younger proceeded to Bavaria, to secure the heritage of his brother, who, though sick to death, was still alive; and deprived the impotent ruler of his dominion, leaving him only his estates. Returning from Bavaria to the western portion of his kingdom, he again conceived the idea of conquering the neighbour state with which he had just concluded a treaty. He marched into the country, and came everywhere upon the traces of Norse devastations. Even the local nobles held aloof from him, and he realised that this was no time for the Frankish Empire to rend its own flesh in fratricidal strife, but that all its united forces ought to be directed towards expelling the pirates from its borders. For this reason when he found himself confronted by a West Frankish army he did not offer battle but professed his readiness to renew the peace. A fresh compact was made in 880, by which Ludwig again renounced his pretensions to the western kingdom in return for the cession of some frontier districts in Lorraine. By this agreement four Lorraine bishoprics — Liège, Cambray, Toul, and Verdun — fell to the eastern kingdom. The boundary line now started from the Schelde, and thence passed over to the Maas where that river makes its way out of the Ardennes, then trended westwards in a wide sweep, running about halfway between the Maas and Marne, and finally turned towards the southern end of Alsace. By this treaty the whole of Lorraine passed to Germany, and her predominance was thus assured for a long time to come.

Ludwig the Younger promptly set to work to rid his territory of the Northern pirates. The latter had established themselves at the mouth of the Schelde, where they had constructed strong bulwarks, behind which they were wont to place their ships in shelter while they perpetrated their ravages upon the country. Godefrid, king of the Danes, was even then making his way back to his ships, laden with rich spoils from a raid inland. Ludwig overtook the robber horde on the march, and inflicted such a severe defeat upon them that five thousand of the enemy were left on the field and the remainder took to flight.

As the king was returning from the scene of his victory he was met by tidings of disaster which plunged him into profound grief. A Saxon levy (Heerbann) had succumbed to a surprise of the Northmen. The latter had made an attack on the Elbe district, not far from Hamburg. A Saxon detachment had hastened thither, but had been dispersed by an unexpectedly high tide and so hemmed in between the arms of the river that it fell a helpless victim to the Northmen, who assailed it on all sides from their ships. Bruno, the commander and the king's brother-in-law, was slain, together with many bishops and counts, and many nobles were carried into captivity.

From this time forward the king, once so energetic, gradually succumbed to the malady to which his brother Carloman had fallen a victim. For two years he was obliged to watch idly the miseries of his country from

his palace, confined to his couch by paralysis and incapable of leading an army. He lived on till the year 882. He had married Liutgard, a daughter of Liudolf, count of Saxony, from whom the royal house of Saxony claims descent. His son, whom he had destined to succeed him, fell from a window in Ratisbon in the year 879 and broke his neck. An illegitimate son, Hugo by name, had already fallen in the battle against the Northmen on the Schelde.

### RAVAGES OF THE NORTHMEN

During the two years in which Ludwig the Younger was slowly pining away the kingdom became a scene of woe indeed. Charles the Fat, the third son of Ludwig the German, might have been expected to assume the government of the kingdom; but, unlike his energetic brothers, he was of feeble intellect, and had suffered from epilepsy from his youth up. As long as his brother was alive he concerned himself solely with the affairs of Swabia and Italy, so that for two years Germany was practically without a ruler. The state of the kingdom answered to this defect. The Northmen came back to the Schelde and the mouth of the Rhine, and thence made predatory excursions, directed indeed for the most part against the Austrasian kingdom, but occasionally touching upon German territory. They soon afterwards sailed up the Waal with a large fleet, got as far as Xanten, and proceeded to establish themselves at Nimeguen, the imperial seat of Charlemagne. This roused the sick king Ludwig to hasten with an army to the Rhine; but, unable to expel the invaders by force of arms, he was obliged to grant them permission to withdraw unmolested; and in their retreat they set fire to the castle of Charlemagne. Only a portion of the Norse host left for the winter, another portion overran the coasts of the kingdom of the West Franks and spread hideous devastation through the country. With the spring of 881 the swarms of Northmen again made their appearance. This time their depredations were confined in the main to the districts about the Schelde and Somme. And now once again the sick king of Germany appeared on the scene with a detachment of his army, and arranged a meeting with Louis, the king of the West Franks, to take counsel with him for combined defence against the Northmen, for the unhappy man was incapable of taking the command of his army in the field. The sight of the horrors perpetrated by the Northmen so inflamed the West Frank warriors and their youthful king that they flung themselves upon the robber hordes and gained a brilliant victory at Saucourt on the Somme in 881. Joy at this fortunate event inspired a contemporary writer, a cleric without doubt, with the famous *Ludwigslied*, a noble monument of old German poetry. The Northmen then left the territory of the West Franks, but only to sail up the Meuse immediately and continue their ravages on East Frankish soil, where the king's illness gave them little cause for fear. At Elsloo, not far from Maestricht,

LUDWIG THE YOUNGER

in the vicinity of a royal palace, they constructed a great camp to protect their ships, and thence undertook raids on the cities of the Rhine, as yet untrodden ground to them, under the leadership of their chieftain kings (*heerkönige*) Godefrid and Siegfrid. Cologne and Bonn were burned, Aachen laid waste, the palace of Charlemagne there set on fire, and the famous *Marienkirche* turned into a stable; the abbeys of Malmedy, Stablo, and Prüm then fell into their hands and were stripped of all their treasures. Wherever the Northmen came they set the houses alight and slaughtered the inhabitants. The country-folk often gathered together in troops for self-defence, but they were generally surrounded by the practised Northmen warriors, who regaled themselves with the torments in which their victims perished. Smitten with the sight of so much misery, the sick king sent an army to the Maas, but the news of his death overtook it and it soon turned homewards.

In the following year, 882, the Northmen laid waste the district along the Moselle. The German king whom they had dreaded was no longer alive, and they therefore gave themselves up without concern to the work of plunder. In a little while the whole region between the Maas, Moselle, and Rhine was a scene of wreck and blackened ruins; the cities of Trèves and Metz were destroyed by fire. The archbishop of Trèves and the bishop of Metz, together with a few of the neighbouring nobles, collected a small army; but they were defeated, and the bishop of Metz himself fell in the battle. The unhappy inhabitants of the country turned in despair to Louis, the young king of the West Franks and the victor of Saucourt, and declared themselves willing to elect him their king. This offer he declined by a reference to existing treaties, but moved with compassion he sent an army to expel the Normans. Never before had Germany fallen upon such evil days.

At the time of Ludwig's death Charles the Fat, the heir to his kingdom, was in Italy, where he had spent most of his time during the period of measureless misery which had laid his country waste. Pope John VIII, under other circumstances no friend to the German branch of the Carlovingians, had summoned him thither because he was the only prince who, as wearer of the imperial crown, could guarantee at least the possibility of protection to the church. After protracted negotiations over the conditions upon which he was to receive the crown — dealing in the main with the long-claimed papal territory and definite sovereign rights therein — Charles the Fat had been crowned emperor at Rome in February, 881. But the pope, who was so harassed by his quarrelsome nobles and by the close neighbourhood of the Saracens that his life was hardly safe, found himself in no better plight than before; for in spite of all his urgent appeals Charles the Fat stayed in upper Italy and made no preparations for coming to Rome. Pope John VIII met his end soon afterwards, being assassinated at Rome in the year 882.[d]

## CHARLES THE FAT (882–887 A.D.)

Charles the Fat [or the Thick], youngest son of Ludwig the German, inherited in 882, on the death of his childless brother, Ludwig the Younger, all the German and Lorraine territory, with the exception of Burgundy; and in 884, also France, properly the inheritance of Charles the Simple, whose two elder brothers were dead, but who being the issue of a marriage pronounced illegal by the pope, and, on account of his imbecility, being recognised by the French themselves as incapable of succeeding to the throne,

Charles the Fat easily took possession of the country, and before long reunited France with Germany, in which he was greatly assisted by the pope, to whom he secretly made great concessions, in order to be acknowledged by him as legitimate heir to the crown.

Charles the Fat was good-natured and indolent. His favourite project, the restoration of the empire as it stood under Charlemagne, he sought to realise by means of bribes and promises, treaties of peace, and other transactions, perfectly in conformity with his character, in which he ever unhesitatingly sacrificed honour to interest. The same means that had succeeded with the pope he imagined would prove equally successful in treating with the Northmen, who, after the death of Ludwig the Younger, renewed their depredations under Godefrid, and laid the Rhine country waste. The palace of Charlemagne at Aachen was converted by them into a stable. Bishop Wala fell bravely fighting at the head of an unequal force before the gates of Metz. The cities on the banks of the Rhine were burned to the ground, and the whole country between Liège, Cologne, and Mainz, laid desolate. At length Siegfrid, the brother of Godefrid, was induced to withdraw his ravaging hordes by the gift of two thousand pounds of gold, and for the additional sum of twelve thousand pounds of silver (to defray which Charles the Fat seized all the treasures of the churches) consented to a truce of twelve years. Godefrid was, moreover, formally invested with Friesland as a fief of the empire. The Northmen, however, notwithstanding these stipulations, continued their depredations, advanced as far as the Moselle, and destroyed the city of Trèves, but were suddenly attacked, in the forest of Ardennes, by the charcoalmen and peasants, and ten thousand of them cut to pieces [883 A.D.]. Charles now became anxious to free himself from his troublesome vassal in Friesland, and the Markgraf Henry, who guarded the frontier at Grabfeld against the Sorbs, brother to Poppo, duke of Thuringia, the confidant of the emperor, invited Godefrid to a meeting, at which he caused him to be treacherously murdered. Godefrid's brother-in-law, the bastard Hugo, was also taken prisoner and deprived of sight. These acts of violence and treason were no sooner perpetrated than the Northmen, glowing with revenge, rushed like a torrent over the country and laid it waste on every side, forcing their way in immense hordes up the Rhine, the Maas, and the Seine. On the Rhine they were opposed by Adalbert, of the race of Babenberg (Bamberg).[e]

In the autumn of the year 885 a great Norse fleet, consisting of ships large and small, almost without number, and carrying an army of between thirty and forty thousand men, sailed up the Seine as far as Paris, even then a flourishing city. Under the leadership of Bishop Gauzlin and Count Eudes of Paris, the inhabitants hastily repaired the old fortifications and collected a little army of some hundreds, which was brought into the city to defend it. The Northmen encamped round about Paris and made their first attempt to storm the city in November, 885, by a violent assault which lasted two days. The Normans were obliged to withdraw to collect wood in the country round for the construction of new siege instruments. In January, 886, they made a fresh assault which lasted for three days, and were again repulsed by the garrison. The siege lasted into the summer of 886. The besieged were reduced to more desperate straits still by a flood which destroyed the Seine bridge, and thus caused the strong tower situated on its farther side to fall into the hands of the Northmen. After this Count Eudes stole through the cordon of the enemy to implore help of the emperor. Charles had hitherto calmly left the city to its fate; but now he summoned a diet and proclaimed

[882-887 A.D.]

a great advance upon Paris. When, in the August of 886, a mighty army marched upon Paris, all men expected that a great battle would be fought there under the eyes of the emperor. Charles, however, preferred to purchase the withdrawal of the enemy. The treaty which he concluded with the Northmen was an insult to the former might of France. The enemy declared that they could not withdraw during the winter season, and he therefore gave Burgundy to them for winter quarters, and undertook to pay them seven hundred pounds in gold in the following spring. And then the great German army marched home without having struck a blow. This act of disgraceful cowardice enraged the army and the nation, and deprived Charles of the last remnant of his reputation. Moreover all kinds of evil reports were current concerning him among the people. It was said that by the help of the pope he intended to legitimise his illegitimate son Bernard, and to procure the succession for him.[d]

CHARLES THE SIMPLE
(From a French cut of 1832)

In the east, he also allowed the Slavs to gain ground, and neglected to support his nephew Arnulf, who could with difficulty defend himself against Suatopluk, who continued to extend his dominions; at the same time, the sons of the old markgrafs Engelschalk and Wilhelm declared war against each other, and Aribo, a son of the former, went over to the Moravians. Suatopluk was victorious on the Danube, and laid the country waste, until Charles appeared in person to beg for peace, which was concluded in 884 on the Tulnerfeld. This monarch proved himself as weak and despicable in his private as in his public character, by carrying on a scandalous suit against his wife, Ricardis, whom he accused of an adulterous connection with his chancellor, Bishop Liutward, and who proved her innocence by ordeal, by passing unharmed through fire in a waxen dress.

The great vassals of the empire, some of whom beheld in the fall of a sovereign they justly despised that of the Carlovingian dynasty and their own aggrandisement, whilst others were influenced by their dislike of the treaties entered into with foreign powers, the pope and the Northmen, and by an anxiety to make reparation for the loss of their national honour, convoked a great diet at Tribur in the valley of the Rhine, and deprived Charles of his crown (887 A.D.), a degradation he survived but one year.

## ARNULF (887-899 A.D.)

The Anti-Carlovingian party was partly successful. The French made choice of Eudes, count of Paris, as successor to the crown, whilst the lower Burgundians in the Nether-Rhone-land (Arles) elected Boson, the son of

Ludwig, and the upper Burgundians in the Western Alps, Count Rudolf, a descendant of the Welfi. In Italy the dukes Guido of Spoleto and Berengar of Friuli made themselves so independent, that they even set themselves up as competitors, through the favour of the pope, for the imperial crown. The Germans alone remained faithful to the Carlovingian house, and elected, to the exclusion of Charles the Simple, who was still alive, Arnulf, the young and energetic, but illegitimate son of Carloman, a brother of Charles the Fat, who had greatly distinguished himself as duke of Bavaria against the Slavs. The consideration in which he was held was so great, that Eudes came to Worms to do homage to him as emperor, a ceremony with which Arnulf contented himself, the Northmen and Slavs affording him no opportunity for recalling his rebellious subjects to their allegiance.

Fresh hostilities instantly broke out on the part of the Northmen, who made an irruption into Lorraine, and after a bloody engagement defeated the Germans near Maestricht, where the archbishop of Mainz, who had marched against them at the head of his vassals, fell. Arnulf now took the field in person, and a dreadful battle ensued near Lyons, where the Northmen had encamped, in which Arnulf, perceiving that the German cavalry were unable to cope with the Norse foot-soldiers, who fought with unexampled dexterity, was the first to spring from his saddle; all the nobles of the arrier-ban followed his example, and the contest became a thick fray, in which the combatants strove hand to hand. Victory sided with the Germans. Siegfrid and Godefrid fell on the field of battle, with several thousands of their followers, whose bodies also choked up the course of the Dyle, across which they had attempted to escape. Arnulf, in gratitude for this deliverance, made a great pilgrimage, and ordained that this day, St. Gilgentag, the 1st of September, should be kept as an annual festival. The Northmen, panic-struck by this fearful catastrophe, henceforward avoided the Rhine, but made much more frequent inroads into the west of France.

Arnulf had also fresh struggles to sustain against the Slavs; the Abodriti crossed the frontiers and laid the country waste. The loyalty of Poppo and of the house of Babenberg, who had been in such close alliance with Charles the Fat, and who now found themselves neglected, became more than doubtful, and Arnulf was constrained to remove the former from his government. Engelschalk the Younger also proved faithless, seduced one of Arnulf's daughters, and then took refuge in Moravia. He was subsequently pardoned, and appointed to guard the Austrian frontier.

As a means of securing the eastern frontier of his empire, Arnulf made peace and entered into an alliance with Suatopluk, prince of Moravia, who was a Christian, in the hope that the foundation of a great Christian Slavian kingdom might eventually prove an effectual bulwark against the irruptions of their heathen brethren in that quarter. The Slavian Mahäranen or Moravians had been converted to Christianity by St. Cyril and St. Methodius, who had visited them from Greece. Borziuoi, prince of Bohemia, being also induced to receive baptism by Suatopluk, his pagan subjects drove him from the throne, and he placed himself (with his wife, St. Ludmilla) under the protection of Suatopluk and Arnulf. Arnulf now gave Suatopluk Bohemia to hold in fee, and unlimited command on the eastern frontier. As a proof of their amity, Suatopluk became sponsor to Arnulf's son, to whom he gave his name, Suatopluk, or Zwentibold; their friendship proved, nevertheless, of but short duration. The Moravian, perceiving that he could not retain his authority over the Slavs so long as he preserved his amicable relations with Germany, yielded to the national hatred, whilst at the same time he gave

fresh assurances of amity to the emperor (892 A.D.). He was also supported in his projects by a great conspiracy among the Germans. The thankless Engelschalk again plotted treason, in which he was upheld by Hildegarde, the maiden daughter of Louis the German, the last of the legitimate descendants of Charlemagne, whilst the Italians, who dreaded Arnulf's threatened presence in their country, were not slow in their endeavours to incite the Moravian to open rebellion. Arnulf, however, discovered the conspiracy, caused Engelschalk to be deprived of sight, and imprisoned Hildegarde at Chiemsee, but afterwards restored her to liberty.

An unexpected ally now came to Arnulf's assistance against Suatopluk. At that period there appeared in ancient Pannonia, first peopled by the Lombards, and at a later date by the Avars, a nation named in their own language Magyars, or Hungarians (strangers), from whom the country derived its name, or Huns, as they were at that time termed by the Germans, who imagined that they again beheld in them the Huns of former times. They were pagans, wild and savage in their habits, and extraordinary riders. Leo, the Grecian emperor, had called them to his assistance against the Bulgarians, and they at first settled under seven leaders (among whom the most distinguished was one named Arpad), each of whom erected a fort or *burg*, in the country known from that circumstance as Siebenburgen, but not long after turned westward and threatened Moravia. Arnulf formed an alliance with them, but never, as he has been accused, invited them into Germany, and Suatopluk, perceiving himself pressed on both sides, gladly remained at peace (894 A.D.).

### ARNULF ENTERS ITALY

In Italy, Guido of Spoleto was victorious over Berengar of Friuli, and in 891 was crowned emperor by the pope, Stephen V. He died in 894, and his son Lambert also received the imperial crown, from Pope Formosus. Arnulf had been acknowledged emperor throughout the north, but not having been anointed or crowned by the pope, his right was liable to be disputed by Guido, and being entreated by both Berengar and Formosus, the latter of whom was held in derision by the insolent Spoletan, he resolved to march at the head of a powerful force into Italy. He has been blamed for quitting Germany, at that period not entirely tranquillised, and exposing himself and his army to the hot climate and diseases of Italy, and to the treachery of the inhabitants, which might easily have been turned upon themselves, and never could have endangered him on this side of the Alps. Arnulf's visit to Italy, the first so-termed pilgrimage to Rome which was undertaken with the double aim of having the ceremony of an imperial coronation performed and of receiving the oath of fealty from his rebellious vassals, has been regarded as a misfortune, because visits to Rome became from this period customary, and ever proved disastrous to the empire. But judgment ought to be given according to the difference of times and circumstances. The union between the people of Lombardy and of Rome was not so close at that time as it became at a later period; no Italian national interest had as yet sprung up in opposition to that of Germany; the Italians were uninfluenced by a desire of separating themselves from the empire, as in later times, but were rather inclined to assert their right over it. Guido, who was connected with the Carlovingians, attempted to turn the separation that had taken place between the northern nations to advantage, and appropriated to himself the title of emperor; and, as far as these circumstances are concerned, Arnulf's visit

to Italy appears to be justified. The visits undertaken at a later period to Rome were, on the other hand, unjustifiable in every respect, by their imposing, as will hereafter be seen, a foreign ruler on Lombardy and Rome, whose union had become gradually stronger, and whose erection into an independent state, to which they were entitled by their geographical position and by their similarity in language and manners, was ever prevented by fresh invasions.

Arnulf crossed the Alps, 894 A.D. Ambrosius, graf of Lombardy, closing the gates of Bergamo against him, he took the city by storm, and hanged his faithless vassal at the gate. His further progress was impeded by the treachery of Eudes, the French king, who took advantage of his absence to arm against him, whilst Rudolf of upper Burgundy actually marched to the assistance of the Spoletans, and Arnulf was thus reluctantly forced to retrace his steps. He undertook a second expedition across the Alps in 896, and advanced into Tuscany, where he was amicably received by Adalbert, the faithless markgraf,[1] and by Berengar, who no sooner found themselves deceived in their expectation of making him subservient to their own interest and of easily outwitting him, than they assumed a threatening attitude. Arnulf, undismayed by the dangers with which he was surrounded, instantly marched upon Rome, whose gates were closed against him by the Spoletans, who successfully repelled every attack on the walls, and the emperor was on the point of retreating, when his soldiers, enraged at the sarcasms of the Italians who manned the walls, rushed furiously to the attack, and carried the city by storm. Lambert's adherents fled, and the rescued pope placed the imperial crown on Arnulf's head.[e] But Germany, divided and helpless, was in no condition to maintain her power over the southern lands; Arnulf retreated in haste, leaving Rome and Italy to sixty years of stormy independence. Arnulf died in 899 at Öttingen and was buried at Ratisbon.[a]

On Arnulf's retreat, Lambert regained the sovereignty of Italy, and again reduced Berengar and Adalbert to submission.[2] He was assassinated in 898, and his adherents invited Ludwig, the son of Boson, into Italy. This prince was a Carlovingian, and grandson to Ludwig II, and at that time reigned over Burgundy. Bertha, the ambitious wife of Adalbert, who was residing at Lucca, and whose pride could not brook the idea that her son Hugo was merely count of Arles, and Ludwig's vassal, plotted his destruction. In order to lull his suspicions, she gave him a friendly reception, but no sooner beheld him entirely in her power than she betrayed him to Berengar, who caused him to be deprived of sight (905 A.D.). Hugo then made himself master of lower Burgundy (Arelat), and after the assassination of Berengar (925) was placed by his mother on the throne of Italy. This country seemed destined to be governed by women; after the death of Bertha, a wealthy Roman, named Theodora, seized the reins of government, revived the ancient spirit of paganism, and drew all in her licentious train. One of her lovers she caused to be elected pope, as John X. Her daughter Marozia, who surpassed her mother in lewdness, married successively two of the sons of Bertha, first Guido, and then King Hugo, with whom she lived in the most profligate

[1] Bertha, the wife of Adalbert (who was blindly guided by her), a woman of an intriguing disposition, was the daughter of Lothair II and of Waldrada. Her first husband was Theobald, count of Arles, by whom she had Hugo, afterwards king of Italy. Sigonius relates the manner in which all the intrigues of those times in Italy and Burgundy were conducted by this woman.

[2] He took the latter prisoner in a stable, and said to him, "Your wife would have made of you either a king or an ass, now you have become the latter."

manner. She kept lovers, and he a harem of mistresses, to whom he gave the names of different heathen goddesses. Her son, Octavian, who became pope, as John XI, died suddenly, and Hugo was driven from his throne (946 A.D.) by his stepson, Alberic, the son of Guido and Marozia, who made Rome his seat of government, whilst a grandson of Berengar, Berengar II, reigned in upper Italy. Hugo's former inheritance, and the Arelat or lower Burgundy, were united with upper Burgundy under Rudolf II, and even his Italian kingdom seemed forever lost to his remaining son, Lothair, whose wife, the beautiful Adelheid, was destined to decide the fate of Italy.

### THE BABENBERG FEUD

Arnulf had, during his life-time, placed his son, Zwentibold, on the throne of Lorraine, in order to guard the frontiers of the empire against the Normans. This young prince entered into alliance with Eudes of Paris, whose daughter he married, and by his insolence drew upon himself the dislike of the clergy. His ill treatment of Rathod, archbishop of Trèves, also rendered him unpopular with the commonalty. A rebellion broke out in Lorraine, and he lost both his crown and his life in a battle that took place on the Maas (900 A.D.). Eudes' reign in France was also of short duration. Charles the Simple was replaced on the throne by the bishops and the vassals, who found their advantage in the imbecility of their monarch. Charles created Regingar duke of Lorraine, and was forced to acknowledge Rollo, duke of Normandy.

In Germany the great vassals, and the bishops also, usurped the direction of affairs. Ludwig, the second son of Arnulf, surnamed the Child, on account of his being at that time only in his seventh year, was, by the intrigues of Otto, duke of Saxony, and of Hatto, archbishop of Mainz (Mayence), who sought to reign under his name, placed upon the imperial throne. The power of the bishops had become exorbitant without the aid of the popes, whose licentious conduct threatened at this period to endanger the church. Hatto, a man of daring courage and deep cunning, unprincipled and cruel, bore unlimited sway in France and in southern Germany, in which he was upheld by Otto, who sought to strengthen himself in Saxony, and to aggrandise his house by the aid of the church. Adalbert, the opponent of the Northmen, Henry and Adelhart, the sons of Henry of Babenberg, finding themselves neglected, and pressed from the north by the Saxons, from the west by the bishops, set themselves up in opposition. Rudolf, bishop of Würzburg, who was supported by Hatto, having obtained a considerable fief for his family by the abuse of his spiritual authority, Adalbert had recourse to arms, upon which Hatto, probably favoured by the ancient hatred of the rest of the vassals to the house of Babenberg, succeeded in having him put out of the ban of the empire.

Henry was killed, and Adelhart was taken prisoner and executed. Adalbert, meanwhile, made a vigorous resistance, and slew Graf Conrad, Bishop Rudolf's brother, but was, erelong, closely besieged in his fortress of Bamberg. Hatto, finding other means unavailing, treacherously offered his mediation, and promised him a free and safe return to his fortress, if he would present himself before the assembled diet. Trusting to the word of the wily priest, the graf issued from his fort, at whose foot he was met by Hatto, who, in the most friendly manner, proposed their breakfasting together within the fortress before setting off on their journey. The graf assented,

and returned with him to the fort; he then accompanied him to the diet, where Hatto declared himself exempted from his promise by his having restored the graf unharmed to his fortress for the purpose of taking his breakfast, and that now he was free to act as he deemed proper. The assembled vassals, upon this, unanimously sentenced Adalbert to death, and he was beheaded. Conrad, Bishop Rudolf's nephew, was created duke of Franconia. This family of the Würzburg bishop was surnamed the Rothenburgers, from Rothenburg on the Tauber; their descendants acquired, at a later period, far greater celebrity under the name of the Saliers.

The treacherous policy of Bishop Hatto, however, made a deep impression upon the minds of the commonalty, among whom loyalty was still held in higher honour than the sacred head of the churchman, and historians relate that, whilst the dukes overlooked the conduct of the bishop and yielded to the outbreak of the popular dissatisfaction, Hatto's name and the memory of his infamy were execrated and derided in popular ballads throughout Germany. His name represented the idea of hierarchical lust of power and avarice, and hence arose the legend that records his miserable death. It is said that, during a famine, a number of peasants who came to the bishop and begged for bread, were by his order shut up in a great barn and burned to death. From the ruins there issued myriads of mice, which ceaselessly pursued the wretched bishop, who vainly attempted to elude them, and who at length, driven to despair, fled for safety to a strong tower standing in the middle of the Rhine near Bingen, but here also the mice continued their pursuit, swam across the water, and devoured him. The tower is still standing, and is known at the present day as the Mäuseturm or mouse-tower. This example is a manifest proof that the popular fictions were founded upon fact, and clearly express the spirit of those times.[c]

## THE HUNGARIAN INVASIONS

It was during this time that the second great invasion of Teutons by Asiatics took place. The Huns of Attila were not more fierce nor more victorious than the wild Magyars who had succeeded to the inheritance of the "scourge of God" and had seized Hungaria. This second invasion, coming at the time when the Northmen were overrunning West Frankland and were still a danger on the northern coasts, affected the history of Germany and of Europe to an extent little seen by those who see no interest in the dim beginnings of modern society. For, as we shall see, it was this second great wave of barbarian invasion which forced upon the free country-dwelling Germans the rude discipline of feudalism and the protecting restraints of city walls. Viewed in this light the dark page of history before us grows luminous and significant.

The great Hungarian, more correctly, Magyar, movement began in the first year of the tenth century, upon the break-up of the Kingdom of Moravia.[a] The Hungarians continually made fresh conquests along the Danube. Cussal, one of their leaders, was, however, defeated in two great battles on the Enns and near to Vienna, and was left on the field (900 A.D.). Undismayed by these disasters, the Hungarians attacked the Carinthian Alps, whilst the Abodriti under Crito made an inroad into Saxony; but being again repulsed, they made an incursion into Italy and laid that country waste (902 A.D.). For a third time they appeared in such force, that Liutpold, the son of Ernst, the former markgraf, was defeated and killed near Presburg, and Ludwig, who was present in this battle, narrowly escaped being taken prisoner. They next invaded

Thuringia (908 A.D.) where the new markgraf, Burkhard, after making a valiant defence, also fell. The following year (909 A.D.) they entered Franconia, where the markgraf Gebhard vainly attempted to stem their progress, and was killed. The death of these leaders at once proves the obstinate resistance made by the Germans, and the numerical superiority of the enemy.

The Hungarian warrior was irresistible in the fury of his onset, invincible in battle by his contempt of death, untiring in pursuit, or secured from it by the rapidity of his horse. His blood-thirstiness, his inhuman treatment of the unarmed and helpless, his destructive and predatory habits, astonished and terrified the milder German, who regarded him in the light of an evil spirit, as the Goth had formerly regarded the Hun, until he became habituated to him. The suddenness with which these mounted hordes appeared in the heart of the country and again vanished, greatly strengthened the belief in their supernatural powers. They also acted with a sort of religious fanaticism, from a belief that every enemy they slew would be their vassal in a future state. They were so blood-thirsty, that they would make use of the corpses of their opponents as tables during their savage feasts. They bound the captured women and maidens with their own long hair, and drove them in flocks to Hungary.

Ludwig the Child, dismayed by these repeated disasters, concluded a treaty of peace with these people, and consented to pay them a ten years' tribute. The Enns was declared the boundary of Hungary, and the wild Arpads erected their royal castle on the beautiful mountain on the Danube, on which the splendid monastery of Mölk now stands. The Germans were deeply sensible of the dishonour incurred by this ignominious tribute, of the danger of their internal dissensions, and of the misfortune of being governed by so impotent a monarch. It was even publicly preached from the pulpit, "Woe to the land, whose king is a child!" The youthful monarch died (911 A.D.) before he had even reigned, and with him ended the race of Charlemagne in Germany.

## CONRAD THE FIRST (911-918 A.D.)

The cessation of the Carlovingian line did not sever the bond of union that existed between the different nations of Germany, although a contention arose between them concerning the election of the new emperor, each claiming that privilege for itself; and as the increase of the ducal power had naturally led to a wider distinction between them, the diet convoked for the purpose represented nations instead of classes. There were consequently four nations and four votes; the Franks under Duke Conrad, whose authority nevertheless could not compete with that of the now venerable Hatto, archbishop of Mainz, who may be said to have been, at that period, the pope in Germany: the Saxons, Friedlanders, Thuringians, and some of the subdued Slavs, under Duke Otto: the Swabians, with Switzerland and Alsace, under different grafs, who, as the immediate officers of the crown, were named Kammerboten, in order to distinguish them from the grafs nominated by the dukes: the Bavarians, with the Tyrolese and some of the subdued eastern Slavs, under Duke Arnulf the Bad, the son of the brave Duke Liutpold. The Lothringians (people of Lorraine) formed a fifth nation, under their duke, Regingar, but were at that period incorporated with France.

The first impulse of the diet was to bestow the crown on the most powerful among the different competitors, and it was accordingly offered to Otto of Saxony, who not only possessed the most extensive territory and the most warlike subjects, but whose authority, having descended to him from his father and grandfather, was also the most firmly secured. But both Otto and his ancient ally, the bishop Hatto, had found the system they had hitherto pursued, of reigning in the name of an imbecile monarch, so greatly conducive to their interest, that they were disinclined to abandon it. Otto was a man who mistook the prudence inculcated by private interest for wisdom, and his mind, narrow as the limits of his dukedom, and solely intent upon the interests of his family, was incapable of the comprehensive views requisite in a German emperor, and indifferent to the welfare of the great body of the nation. The examples of Boson, of Eudes, of Rudolf of upper Burgundy, and of Berengar, who, favoured by the difference in descent of the people they governed, had all succeeded in severing themselves from the empire, were ever present to his imagination, and he believed that as, on the other side of the Rhine, the Frank, the Burgundian, and the Lombard, severally obeyed an independent sovereign, the East Frank, the Saxon, the Swabian, and the Bavarian, on this side of the Rhine, were also desirous of asserting a similar independence, and that it would be easier and less hazardous to found an hereditary dukedom in a powerful and separate state, than to maintain the imperial dignity, undermined as it was by universal hostility.

CONRAD THE FIRST
(From an old print)

The influence of Hatto and the consent of Otto placed Conrad, duke of Franconia, on the imperial throne. Sprung from a newly arisen family, a mere creature of the bishop, his nobility as a feudal lord only dating from the period of the Babenberg feud, he was regarded by the church as a pliable tool, and by the dukes as little to be feared. His weakness was quickly demonstrated by his inability to retain the rich allods of the Carlovingian dynasty as heir to the imperial crown, and his being constrained to share them with the rest of the dukes; he was, nevertheless, more fully sensible of the dignity and of the duties of his station than those to whom he owed his election probably expected. His first step was to recall Regingar of Lorraine, who was oppressed by France, to his allegiance as vassal of the empire.

Otto died in 912, and his son Henry, a high-spirited youth, who had greatly distinguished himself against the Slavs, erelong quarrelled with the aged

bishop Hatto. According to the legendary account, the bishop sent him a golden chain, so skilfully contrived as to strangle its wearer. The truth is, that the ancient family feud between the house of Conrad and that of Otto, which was connected with the Babenbergers, again broke out, and that the emperor attempted again to separate Thuringia, which Otto had governed since the death of Burkhard, from Saxony, in order to hinder the over-preponderance of that ducal house. Hatto, it is probable, counselled this step, as a considerable portion of Thuringia belonged to the diocese of Mainz, and a collision between him and the duke was therefore unavoidable. Henry flew to arms, and expelled the adherents of the bishop from Thuringia, which forced the emperor to take the field in the name of the empire against his haughty vassal.

This highly unfortunate civil war was a signal for a fresh irruption of the Slavs and Hungarians. During this year the Bohemians and Sorbs also made an inroad into Thuringia and Bavaria, and in 913 the Hungarians advanced as far as Swabia, but being surprised near Ötting by the Bavarians under Arnulf, who on this occasion bloodily avenged his father's death, and by the Swabians under the Kammerboten, Erchanger and Berthold, they were all, with the exception of thirty of their number, cut to pieces. Arnulf subsequently embraced a contrary line of policy, married the daughter of Geisa, king of Hungary, and entered into a confederacy with the Hungarian and the Swabian Kammerboten, for the purpose of founding an independent state in the south of Germany, where he had already strengthened himself by the appointment of several markgrafs, Rudiger of Pechlarn in Austria, Rathold in Carinthia, and Barthold in the Tyrol. He then instigated all the enemies of the empire simultaneously to attack the Franks and Saxons, at that crisis at war with each other (915 A.D.), and whilst the Danes under Gorm the Old, and the Abodriti (Obotrites), destroyed Hamburg, immense hordes of Hungarians, Bohemians, and Sorbs laid the country waste as far as Bremen.

The emperor was, meanwhile, engaged with the Saxons. On one occasion Henry narrowly escaped being taken prisoner, being merely saved by the stratagem of his faithful servant, Thiatmar, who caused the emperor to retreat by falsely announcing to him the arrival of a body of auxiliaries. At length a pitched battle was fought near Merseburg between Henry and Eberhard (915 A.D.), the emperor's brother, in which the Franks were defeated, and the superiority of the Saxons remained, henceforward, unquestioned for more than a century. The emperor was forced to negotiate with the victor, whom he induced to protect the northern frontiers of the empire whilst he applied himself in person to the re-establishment of order in the south.

In Swabia, Salomon, bishop of Constance, who was supported by the commonalty, adhered to the imperial cause, whilst the Kammerboten were unable to palliate their treason, and were gradually driven to extremities. Erchanger, relying upon aid from Arnulf and the Hungarians, usurped the ducal crown and took the bishop prisoner. Salomon's extreme popularity filled him with such rage that he caused the feet of some shepherds, who threw themselves on their knees as the captured prelate passed by, to be chopped off. His wife, Bertha, terror-stricken at the rashness of her husband and foreseeing his destruction, received the prisoner with every demonstration of humility, and secretly aided his escape. He no sooner reappeared than the people flocked in thousands around him: *Heil, Herro! Heil, Liebo!* ("Hail, master! Hail, beloved one!") they shouted, and in their zeal,

attacked and defeated the traitors and their adherents. Berthold vainly defended himself in his mountain stronghold of Hohentwiel. The people so urgently demanded the death of these traitors to their country that the emperor convoked a general assembly at Albingen in Swabia, sentenced Erchanger and Berthold to be publicly beheaded, and nominated Burkhard (917 A.D.), whose father and uncle had been assassinated by order of Erchanger, as successor to the ducal throne. Arnulf withdrew to his fortress at Salzburg, and quietly awaited more favourable times. His name was branded with infamy by the people, who henceforth affixed to it the epithet of "The Bad," and the *Nibelungenlied* has perpetuated his detested memory.

Conrad died in 918, without issue. On his death-bed, mindful only of the welfare of the empire, he proved himself deserving even by his latest act of the crown he had so worthily worn, by charging his brother Eberhard to forget the ancient feud between their houses, and to deliver the crown with his own hands to his enemy, the free-spirited Henry, whom he judged alone capable of meeting all the exigences of the state. Eberhard obeyed his brother's injunctions, and the princes respected the will of their dying sovereign.

### REIGN OF HENRY (I) THE FOWLER (918-936 A.D.)

The princes, with the exception of Burkhard and of Arnulf, assembled at Fritzlar, elected the absent Henry king, and despatched an embassy to inform him of their decision. It is said that the young duke was at the time among the Harz Mountains, and that the ambassadors found him in the homely attire of a sportsman in the fowling floor. He obeyed the call of the nation without delay, and without manifesting surprise. The error he had committed in rebelling against the state, it was his firm purpose to atone for by his conduct as emperor. Of a lofty and majestic stature, although slight and youthful in form, powerful and active in person, with a commanding and penetrating glance, his very appearance attracted popular favour: besides these personal advantages, he was prudent and learned, and possessed a mind replete with intelligence. The influence of such a monarch on the progressive development of society in Germany could not fail of producing results fully equalling the improvements introduced by Charlemagne.

The youthful Henry,[1] the first of the Saxon line, was proclaimed king of Germany at Fritzlar (919 A.D.) by the majority of votes, and, according to ancient custom, raised upon the shield. The archbishop of Mainz offered to anoint him according to the usual ceremony, but Henry refused, alleging that he was content to owe his election to the grace of God and to the piety of the German princes, and that he left the ceremony of anointment to those who wished to be still more pious.

The accession of Henry I is an event of the utmost importance in the history of Germany. From the days of Ludwig the German the eastern Carlovingians had been engaged upon protecting and welding together that eastern section of the empire which to-day we know as Germany. But they had ruled over the various German tribes by the right that Charlemagne had made for himself, and then the right of conquest. This domination of the Carlovingian kings of the Franks over the Germans died out in Arnulf. In the failure of Conrad's reign the second great step was taken in severing the tie with the past. The domination of the eastern Franks was now to

[1 Known to Germans as Heinrich der Vogler.]

be rejected altogether, and with the substitution of the Luidolfings for the Carolings, the race of Wittekind succeeded to the inheritance that had been seized by Charles.[a]

## THE UNIFICATION OF THE EMPIRE

Before Henry could pursue his more elevated projects, the assent of the southern Germans, who had not acknowledged their choice of their northern compatriots, had to be gained. Burkhard of Swabia, who had asserted his independence, and who was at that time carrying on a bitter feud with Rudolf, king of Burgundy, whom he had defeated (919 A.D.) in a bloody engagement near Winterthur, was the first against whom he directed the united forces of the empire, in whose name he, at the same time, offered him peace and pardon. Burkhard, seeing himself constrained to yield, took the oath of fealty to the newly elected king at Worms, but continued to act with almost his former unlimited authority in Swabia, and even undertook an expedition into Italy in favour of Rudolf, with whom he had become reconciled. The Italians, enraged at the wantonness with which he mocked them, assassinated him. Henry bestowed the dukedom of Swabia on Hermann, one of his relations, to whom he gave Burkhard's widow in marriage. He also bestowed a portion of the south of Alamannia on King Rudolf, in order to win him over, and in return received from him the holy lance, with which the side of the Saviour had been pierced as he hung on the cross. Finding it no longer possible to dissolve the dukedoms and great fiefs, Henry, in order to strengthen the unity of the empire, introduced the novel policy of bestowing the dukedoms, as they fell vacant, on his relations and personal adherents, and of allying the rest of the dukes with himself by intermarriage, thus uniting the different powerful houses in the state into one family.

Bavaria still remained in an unsettled state. Arnulf the Bad, leagued with the Hungarians, against whom Henry had great designs, had still much in his power, and Henry, resolved at any price to dissolve this dangerous alliance, not only concluded peace with this traitor on that condition, but also married his son Henry to Judith, Arnulf's daughter (921 A.D.). Arnulf deprived the rich churches of great part of their treasures, and was consequently abhorred by the clergy, the chroniclers of those times, who, chiefly on that account, depicted his character in such unfavourable colours.[e]

With wonderful acuteness of perception Henry comprehended the situation and recognised in what way alone a union of the German tribes was possible; how, in other words, the existence of the east-Frankish, *i.e.*, of the German kingdom, could alone be preserved. He took care not to follow the wrong lead of King Conrad; he struck out new paths for himself with ingenious and undaunted spirit. He did not wish to establish the authority of the state by the subjection of the single stems under one ruling one, as the Merovingians and after them the Carlovingians had done, nor to establish Saxon dominion according to Frankish rule; he did not plan to rule and administer the lands from one centre with the aid of the officials who were dependent on him alone, as had been the way of the Frankish kings. Only through a more liberal organisation of the realm, as Henry saw, could a union of the German people be maintained at the time. The ideal which presented itself to his mind was something as follows: each stem was to stand by itself as far as its own affairs was concerned, and was to rule itself according to old rights and tradition; it was to be ruled and led in times of war and peace by

a duke to whom the counts and lords of the land owed military attendance and obedience. This duke was to settle the disputes among the lords of the land at his diets, was to preserve peace and protect his boundaries from the inroads of the enemy; but just as the dukes governed the single stems in the realm, so the king was to rule over all the lands of the empire; he was to be the highest judge and general of the whole people. So it was to be, and so it was.

In the idea which Henry conceived, the kingdom appeared almost as only an alliance of German stems under the leadership of a king jointly elected by them. And yet they were far from willingly recognising this leadership. Bavaria and Swabia had separated themselves from the kingdom for the moment: in the former Arnulf ruled, in the latter Burkhard, with wholly independent power; and Lorraine had been allied with the west-Frankish kingdom for years. Franconia and Saxony alone formed the kingdom at first; for the moment Henry's power did not go beyond them. And although he as king was raised above Eberhard, still the latter as a duke stood practically on a level beside him. Just as Henry reserved for himself the full ducal power as he had always possessed it, so also in the Frankish lands it was preserved for Eberhard in the same way; the position which his family had won and established under Conrad's rule was in no wise lessened. Never again did any disagreement break out between Henry and Eberhard; they remained allies until Henry's death and the growing state was founded chiefly upon their accord. Henry's thoughts, however, were not limited to Saxony and Franconia; from the very beginning they had been directed to the union of all the German tribes, and hence he made it his first business to bring all the stems which had once belonged to the east-Frankish kingdom to a recognition of his supremacy.

In the sixth year of his reign King Henry had accomplished the immense task of uniting all the German lands and tribes; he had succeeded in doing that for which King Conrad had striven so obstinately and yet so unsuccessfully. Not with haste and impatience, not with terror and the sound of arms, had he done it; but through a quiet, clear perception of the true position of things and that lauded pacific disposition which would not let him shed German blood against Germans for no purpose. Thus a bond of unity was woven around the German stems, which became more and more close in time and surrounded by which the Germans first came to a clear consciousness of their own nationality. The kingdom as it now stood appears almost like an alliance of states; but out of it grew quickly enough a powerful, united state under as strong a monarchy as those times could produce. Henry had reached the goal which the pope and bishops at the council of Altheim had set themselves and had not been able to reach — the unification of Germany; but he reached this goal by a wholly different road than the one those bishops had taken. Thus it was not they who laid the cornerstone of the German Empire, but the man who had refused to accept the crown from the hand of a priest.

Everything was accomplished almost in silence; a new order of things for centuries to come was established with ease — by magic, one feels inclined to say; endless confusion was seen to be solved in the simplest fashion. It was as when an unknown terror breaks upon a large number of people in the darkness of night — everything is thrown into a confusion which increases from moment to moment, until the sun shines out in the morning and its beams gild the fields: the confused masses then easily assort themselves, quiet returns, and the world beams again in clear sunshine. Henry's clear spirit was the sun which turned the night of the German lands into day.

[924 A.D.]

WARS AGAINST OUTER ENEMIES

But of what use was all this building and creating if he could not succeed in enduringly protecting the empire against its outer enemies and above all against the Hungarians? However, in spite of the discouragement caused by repeated defeats, Henry did not lose faith in the strength of his people, and fortune favoured the courageous man. For it was fortune that led the Hungarians just at that time to spare the German lands of the hither Rhine for a longer space of time and to direct their attacks chiefly against Italy, the west-Frankish kingdom, and Lorraine. But in the year 924 they appeared again and turned towards Saxony. Wherever they came everything was laid desolate. The castles and strongholds, the cloisters and churches, the dwellings of the poor peasants, were all reduced to ashes; old and young, men and women, were slaughtered; again by the clouds of smoke and the appearance of fire in the sky could the path be followed which was taken by the terrible enemy; again the people took refuge in the forests, on the tops of mountains, and in hidden caves. "It is better to be silent on this subject," says Wittekind [the historian], "than to increase suffering by words."

King Henry did not dare to meet the superior forces of the enemy in an open battle. He had learned to know what war with them meant at an early date, and he did not believe his army was able to face them. It is true that every free Saxon who had completed his thirteenth year was bound to service, and had to take up arms against an approaching enemy; the old military provisions of the Frankish kingdom were also in force according to the letter of the law, and according to them every free man who owned at least five hides of land had to serve personally in the militia, and the smaller land-owners had to equip a fighter in common. But these provisions had fallen into disuse; hard times had decreased the number of freemen; the militia, seldom assembled, was formed of men knowing nothing of war.

Moreover, the Hungarians had to be met with cavalry, and although the Frankish feudal army consisted almost entirely of mounted knights, yet in Saxony cavalry service was still new and not widespread; the greatest part of the nobility here kept only poorly armed dependents who performed their military service on foot. Henry avoided a battle, therefore, and shut himself up with his faithful followers in his fortified castle Werla at the foot of the Harz, not far from Goslar. The favour of fortune again did not desert him. A prominent Hungarian was captured by the king's men and brought before him. The captive stood in high favour with his people, and consequently ambassadors were sent at once to free him from the bonds of the enemy. Gold and silver were offered for him in large measure, but that was not what Henry sought. He wanted peace, only peace, and he even offered, if he should be granted a truce of nine years, not only to give back the captive but also to pay the Hungarians a yearly tribute. On these conditions the Hungarians, swearing to observe a truce of nine years, withdrew to their homes.

Larger fortified towns were at that time still unknown in Saxony and Thuringia; only on the banks of the Rhine and the Danube, and beyond these rivers where the Romans had once lived, were there on German soil populous towns with fortified walls and towers, which, however, since the expeditions of the Normans and the Hungarian wars, lay mostly in heaps and ruins. The Saxons according to ancient custom still lived in single houses standing alone in the midst of their fields and meadows, or else they assembled in open villages. Only here and there arose royal palaces and castles of the nobles, only here and there were the enclosed seats of bishops,

priests, and monks, the first gathering-places of a more active intercourse. The boundaries were also poorly protected; the strongholds which Charlemagne had once laid out had been mostly destroyed in the wars against the Danes and Wends. The land thus, without being able to offer any resistance, lay open to the inroads of the enemy, which could not be checked in the interior either, on account of the scattered settlements. The first necessity, therefore, seemed to Henry to be to enlarge the existing forts and fortify them more strongly, to lay out new strongholds so as to be able to assemble larger forces in secure places. This was especially imperative on the frontiers in order to repulse the enemy on the very threshold.

Henry had already succeeded in destroying the Serbs on the Saale, and at the same time the Wendian tribes which had forced their way across the middle Elbe had been driven back across the river. In these frontier regions, which had fallen to him as the victor, Henry had settled large numbers of his dependents and bound them to military service in return for larger or smaller fiefs. He had thus at the same time established military colonies on the conquered territory, and here, where everything was on a military footing, and in the neighbouring districts which stood mostly under the same leadership with the marks he had free hand to carry out his plans. In the same way King Edward of England had a few years before restored or newly built a long line of frontier forts, and thus secured his realm against the inroads of the enemy; perhaps Henry in his undertakings had the example of the Anglo-Saxons in mind.

Day and night people were now at work building in the frontier districts. House had to adjoin house, and court, court; everything was surrounded with walls and ramparts. The work went on without a moment's pause. Henry encouraged the people to unaccustomed efforts, because he wished them to become hardened in times of peace, so that they would be better able to endure the privations of war. Thus there grew up in those districts settlements surrounded with walls and ramparts: smaller places were enlarged, destroyed fortifications restored; often large numbers of human habitations suddenly sprang up, where before only a simple hut had stood. At that time, Quedlinburg in the Harz was wholly rebuilt; Merseburg, which was always a place dear to the king, was enlarged and surrounded by a stone wall.

Henry at the same time opened at Merseburg an asylum for criminals; this was done in order to populate the town and make it capable of defending itself against the enemy. These suspicious characters lived in a suburb of Merseburg, whereas the citadel itself was occupied by more reliable dependents. These criminals were called the Merseburgans, and formed a troop of soldiery which Henry seems often to have used in especially dangerous enterprises. "It was," says Wittekind*f* [the historian], "a band composed of robbers; for the king, who liked to be mild towards his subjects, exempted even thieves or robbers, when they were brave and warlike men, from their deserved punishment and caused them to settle in the suburb of Merseburg. He gave them fields and arms and ordered them to keep the peace with their countrymen; against the Wends, however, he let them make plundering expeditions as often as they pleased." So strong was this Merseburg troop that a few years later it furnished 1,000 men for the war with Bohemia.

But also in other ways Henry tried to increase the population of the fortified towns. He commanded all diets, popular gatherings, and festivities to be held within the walls of the citadel; as often as the Saxons came together they were to assemble in the strongholds so that they might

gradually become accustomed to life in enclosed places, which they still regarded as imprisonment. Here also he perhaps was following the example of King Edward, who in the same way ordered all commercial dealings to be conducted within the gates of the citadel. But the fortified places of Saxony and Thuringia were not only to provide the possibility of offering a strong resistance to a fresh attack of the enemy; they were at the same time to provide refuge and safety to all the inhabitants of the frontier regions. Consequently every ninth man had to move into the town to erect a dwelling for himself and his eight companions, and also to provide granaries and storehouses, since the third part of all the fruits of the field which were produced had to be delivered in the citadel and were there stored. The eight, however, who remained outside cultivated the field of the one within, sowed it and harvested it, and brought the harvest into his granaries. Without the citadel there could be no buildings, or only worthless ones, since these were destroyed at the first attack of the enemy.

His military provisions, so far as can be seen from the scanty records, dealt with feudal service in Saxony, which he compelled from now on to be rendered in horses and mounted soldiers. Henry remodelled the organization of the army and the conduct of war, and brought them into new lines which were followed by the Germans for a long time afterward.

Henry was occupied four years with the ordering of all these things. "My tongue," says Wittekind,[f] "cannot tell with what precaution and watchfulness he did everything at that time which could help to protect the fatherland." As soon, however, as Henry knew that his army was in fighting trim, he used it to attack the Wend tribes (928). They were the nearest enemies of the empire and of Saxony, and at the same time less dangerous than the Hungarians; so that the war against them was considered the best school to prepare for the stronger enemy. The first attack was upon the Hevelli, a Wend tribe, which dwelt on both sides of the Havel and on the lower Spree. Several times they fought, and Henry conquered each time, penetrating finally to the chief stronghold of the tribe, the present Brandenburg. The city, at that time called Brennaburg, lay surrounded by the Havel. It was midwinter when Henry laid siege to it, and he pitched his camp on the ice. Ice, iron, and famine,—the three brought about the fall of Brennaburg, and with it the whole of the land of the Hevelli fell into the hands of the conqueror.

Henry next proceeded southward against the Daleminzi, against whom he had won his first laurels. They were familiar with the strokes of Henry's sword and did not dare to meet him in open battle. They shut themselves up within their stronghold, Gana, but this also was taken on the twentieth day. Deadly hatred had long reigned between Wends and Saxons, which here demanded sanguinary sacrifices. The city was plundered, the grown men were killed, the children sold as slaves. Severe custom would have it thus, and the German has taken his word "slave" from the Slavs.

Henry also proceeded against the Czechs in Bohemia, whose lands adjoined those of the Daleminzi, with whom they were tribally related. Only since one generation had the tribe been ruled by one family, that of the Premyslids; Christianity had made some headway under this single rulership, although it found difficult entry among the stiff-necked tribe.

A more powerful resistance was to be expected from this numerous tribe, united under one rule, than from the other Slavic stems. Therefore the king called on Duke Arnulf for aid, and a Bavarian army advanced through the Bohemian forest, at the same time with the king, into the land of the

Czechs. It was the first time that the Bavarians had given the Saxons military attendance. They penetrated clear into the centre of the country where Prague is located on the bank of the swift Moldau. Here the young Bohemian duke Wenceslaus, who had already accepted Christianity through the influence of his pious grandmother, Ludmilla, surrendered himself and his land to the king (929). He received it again in fief and from now on paid the Saxons a tribute, which perhaps already at that time, as later, consisted of 500 silver marks and 120 oxen. From that time on the kings of Germany demanded feudal service and obedience from the Bohemian princes, until finally the land itself at a much later period fell to the German princes.

While the king himself was subjugating these Slavic stems, his counts had fought with success against the Wends living in the north. The Redarii living in the lake districts north of the Havel as far as the Peene were first conquered, then the Abodriti and the Wilzi who dwelt north and west of them clear to the shores of the Baltic. Within a short time the greatest part of the land between the Elbe and Oder was won for Saxon rule, but the hard will of the Wend tribes living in these districts was not broken and the blood of their relatives which had been shed cried for vengeance. First the Redarii arose in rage against German rule; they gathered together and fell upon Walsleben. The strongly fortified town was at that time well populated, but it could not defend itself against the superior numbers of the enemy. It was taken by assault and all its inhabitants were killed; not one saw the light of the coming day. This was a signal for a general uprising. The Wend tribes of the north arose to a man, to throw off the hated yoke of the Saxons.

Henry prepared quickly for battle and ordered Count Bernhard, to whom he had intrusted the guardianship of the Redarii, and Count Thietmar, to begin the war at once, by the seige of Lenzen, a stronghold which was in the hands of the Wends. The Saxon militia was assembled as well as possible in the general haste, and together with the war forces from the marks, was placed under Bernhard's command. When Lenzen had been besieged for five days, it was announced by spies that an army of Wends was in the vicinity and that it would attack the Saxon camp at the fall of night. Bernhard at once assembled his warriors in his tent and ordered them to remain under arms the whole night. The crowd separated and each gave himself up to joy or sorrow, hope or fear, according to whether he desired the battle or not. Night came on; it was darker than usual, the sky covered with heavy clouds, and the rain fell in torrents. In such weather the courage of the Wends sank and they gave up the attack. When, however, the morning dawned, although the Saxons had been under arms all night, Bernhard decided to venture an attack himself, and gave the signal for battle. Thereupon all took an oath forgiving themselves their failings and each other their ancient feuds — such was the custom before a battle — and with a solemn oath swore to support and aid each other in the strife as they would their leaders. Then when the sun came up — the sky shone in clear blue after the storm of the night — they marched out of camp.

At the first assault Bernhard had to give way before the superior force of the enemy. But he noticed that the Wends had no more cavalry than he, although they had countless numbers of infantry which moved forward on the muddy ground only with great difficulty and was driven back by the force of the cavalry. Consequently he did not lose courage, and the confidence of himself and his followers increased when they saw that a dense steam went up from the wet garments of the Wends, whereas they themselves were surrounded with clearest light; it was as if the God of the Christians

were fighting with them against the heathen. Again the signal for attack was given, and with a joyful war cry they charged on the ranks of the enemy. The Wends stood close together, and it was attempted in vain to break a path through their compact ranks; only on the right and left were a few isolated squads of Wends attacked, conquered, and killed. Much blood had already been shed on both sides and the Wends still kept their stand. Then Bernhard sent a messenger to Thietmar asking him to hasten to the help of the army, and the latter quickly sent a captain with fifty knights clad in armour, to attack the enemy from the side. With the rattle of armour this band charged like a tempest upon the Wends; their ranks wavered, and soon the whole army broke into the wildest flight. The sword of the Saxons raged in all parts of the field. The Wends tried to reach Lenzen, but in vain; for Thietmar had occupied all the roads. Thereupon many of them in despair plunged into a neighbouring lake, and those whom the sword had spared found death in the waves. Not one of the infantry escaped and very few of the cavalry. Eight hundred were taken captive; they had been threatened with death and they all found death on the following day. More than one hundred thousand Wends were said to have perished. The Saxons also suffered severe losses and lost many a noble man from their army. With this victory the war was ended. The battle was fought on September 4th, 929; Lenzen surrendered the next day. The inhabitants laid down their arms and asked only for their lives; this was granted them, but they had to leave the city naked. Their wives and children, their slaves, their possessions — all fell into the hands of the conquerors.

Bernhard and Thietmar won great renown above all the German people, because they had won a glorious victory over an innumerable army of the detested Wends with a comparatively small force collected in haste. The king received them with the greatest honour, and from his mouth their deeds received the highest tribute. Other joyful sounds mixed with the jubilee of victory. Just at that time Henry was celebrating the marriage of his eldest son Otto. He had chosen a life companion for him from the royal family of the tribally related Anglo-Saxons; the beautiful Editha, daughter of King Edward and a sister of King Athelstan, who at that time ruled England with a strong hand, was to be led to the altar by Otto. Athelstan had felt himself so flattered by Henry's suit that he sent over to Germany not only Editha, but also her sister Elgiva; Henry and Otto might choose between the two. Accompanied by Athelstan's chancellor Thorketul, the princesses sailed up the Rhine as far as Cologne, were they were met by Henry's ambassadors. Editha remained the chosen one and the marriage was celebrated at once with great pomp (930). As a rich dowry from her husband Editha received Magdeburg and many beautiful estates in Saxony.

But the nine years of the truce with the Hungarians were now nearing their end and war was again threatened with these most terrible enemies of the empire. Henry had made good use of his respite. Saxony was protected by firm strongholds, the king had at his disposal an army experienced in war and faithfully attached to him; it was now time to measure swords with the old enemy. It was not long until the ambassadors of the Hungarians appeared to demand the tribute as usual, but they returned this time with empty bags. Thereupon the mounted bands of the Hungarians saddled quickly, and countless swarms took their way towards the west through the land of the Daleminzi; but the latter knew that Henry was prepared for war, and instead of the demanded tribute they scornfully threw a fat dog before the enemy. However angry the Hungarians were at this insult, they neverthe-

less did not stop for revenge, but hurried on to the land of Thuringia, which they laid desolate in the winter of 932–933. When Thuringia could no longer support the large numbers of the enemy, a part of the army proceeded further west in order to attack Saxony from another side.

Henry had already collected a strong force of cavalry from Saxony and Thuringia and had ordered out the militia. Also from Bavaria and the other lands subject to him, many knights, it is related, had hurried to his standard. Quietly he awaited the moment when the countless swarms of the enemy should separate. Scarcely, however, had that troop separated and started towards the west, than Saxons and Thuringians attacked it impetuously. In a sanguinary battle the leaders of the enemy fell and their hordes fled panic-stricken in all directions. Many perished from the winter frosts, others died of hunger; a large number fell into captivity.

The other, larger part of the Hungarian army, however, which had remained in the east, in Thuringia, had in the meanwhile been informed that there was a castle in the neighbourhood where lived a sister of the king — she was born to Duke Otto out of wedlock and had married a Thuringian named Wido — in which there was much gold and silver. Consequently they at once set out and assaulted the castle. They would have taken it at the first attack if the fall of night had not put an end to the battle. Scarcely, however, were their arms at rest, when they heard of the defeat of their companions, of the victory of the Saxons, and of how King Henry was advancing against them with a powerful army. They lit great bonfires to collect their scattered troops and at once began their retreat.

Henry was camped that same night not far from the Hungarians in a place which was then called Riade, perhaps the present Rietheburg, in the golden meadow on the Unstrut, where many strongholds of the Luidolfings were scattered on all sides. When morning broke and it was learned how near the enemy was, the king determined to attack them at once and placed his army in battle array. He exhorted his followers to put all their trust in God, and declared that he would be with them to-day as in so many other battles; the Hungarians were enemies of the empire and of them all, they must fight to avenge their fatherland and their fathers; the enemy would soon give way if they would only charge bravely and strike boldly. Then the heart of each one in the army swelled with courage; they all saw with joy how their king hurried about on his horse, now in front, now in the middle, and now on the last ranks of the army, and how everywhere the flag of the archangel Michael, the chief banner of the empire, waved before him. The king was afraid that when the Hungarians saw the large numbers of armed horsemen of the Saxons they would not keep their stand but would break apart and thus frustrate a decisive battle. Consequently he sent on ahead a small force of one thousand Thuringian infantry with only a few armed knights. He thought that when this force appeared the Hungarians would at once give battle and then be led on, clear up to the battle ranks of his army. And so it happened. The Hungarians ventured close to the king's army, but as soon as they caught sight of the troops of knights they turned and fled. And they fled so rapidly that, although they were pursued for two miles, only a few of them were captured or killed; the king, however, stormed their camp and freed all prisoners. It was the 15th of March, 933; after it, so long as Henry lived, no Hungarian was seen on German soil.

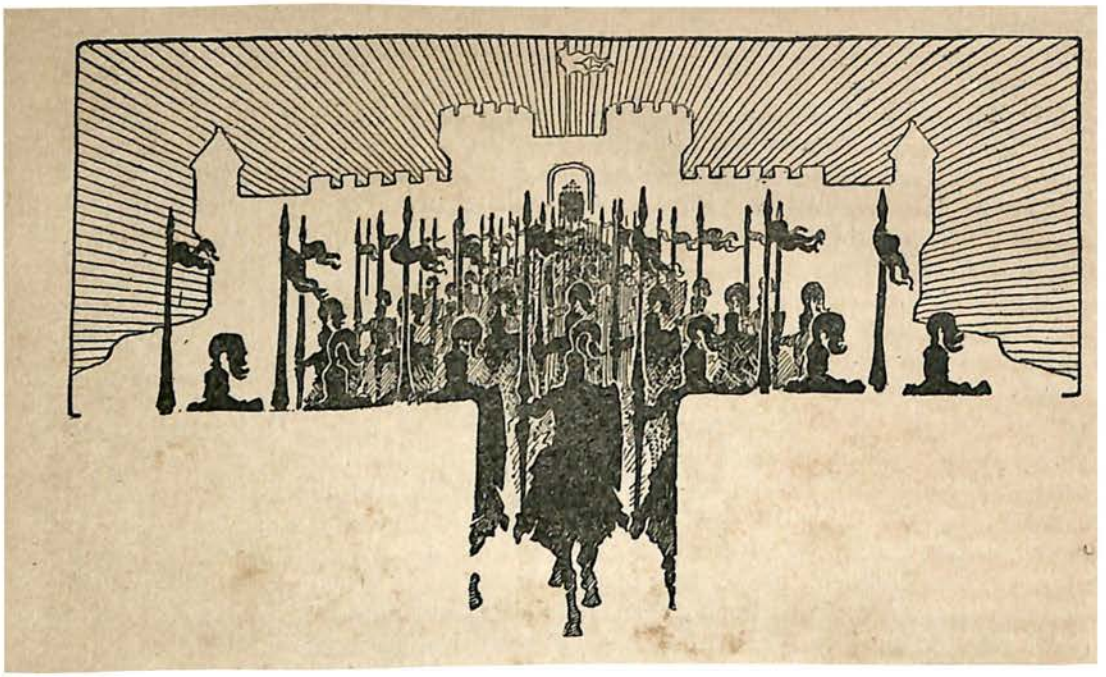
When this memorable victory had been fought, there was no end to the jubilee in the army and in the whole Saxon land. As father of the fatherland Henry greeted his army and his people; they extolled him as world-

ruler and emperor almost as if they had had a premonition of the greatness and power which were reserved for his son Otto. He, however, gave God the glory for the victory; he attributed his success to divine aid alone, and the tribute which he had been accustomed to pay to the enemy he now gave to the church in order to give it to the poor. Far over the whole world spread the renown of the great Saxon king, who had been the first to conquer the much-feared Hungarians in a great battle and had driven them out of his land.

And Henry's sword was to reach even the last enemy of the Saxons — the Danes. The latter had long since overstepped the bounds which the emperor Charles had once marked out for them. Not only the frontier district between the Eider, the Treene, and the Schlei had they taken in possession, but also, after the unfortunate battle in which Duke Bruno fell, they had seized all the land north of the Elbe, with the aid of the Wends, and had with fire and sword laid waste the fruitful districts of the Holsteins. The whole German population which had settled here was crowded over the Elbe, and they were hardly safe from the plundering of the enemy even on the hither side of the broad stream. It was only gradually that the Danes were driven back so that the Saxons could return to their old seats across the Elbe. But the Germans were also harassed by the Danes from a different quarter; bands of northern pirates landed continually on the coasts of Friesland and penetrated far into Saxony and Lorraine.

The Danes seem often to have been overpowered, since we learn that in 931 Henry baptised the kings of the Abodriti and of the Danes. But the struggle was not ended. Therefore, the old hero rose once again at the end of his life and led his army across the boundaries of the Danes (934). Their king, Gorm the Old, although he was skilled in many battles as a successful fighter, and had first united the kingdom of the Danes on the islands in Skane and Jutland, yet did not dare to meet the conqueror of the Hungarians in an open battle. He sued for peace and promised to accept any conditions. Henry re-established the old boundaries of the empire, by giving the abandoned districts as a fief to Saxon warriors; he gave these northern districts a similar military organisation to the marks captured from the Wends. The districts between the Eider, the Treene, and the Schlei, called later the mark of Schleswig, remained in the German Empire until Conrad II, nearly a hundred years later, ceded to the Danes the land as far as the Eider. This cession seemed to be favoured by circumstances, but it was not a fortunate act, since it displaced the boundaries which Charlemagne had established and Henry had restored.[b]

The same year (934 A.D.) a friendly meeting took place between him and the kings of France and Burgundy on the Char, a tributary of the Maas. Henry afterwards planned a visit to Rome, but died without accomplishing that project (936 A.D.), when at the height of his splendour and renown. He was buried at Quedlinburg, his favourite residence.[c]



# CHAPTER VIII

## OTTO THE GREAT AND HIS SUCCESSORS

[936–1024 A.D.]

### THE CORONATION OF OTTO (936 A.D.)

In the summer of 936 the leading men of the secular and clerical ranks assembled at Aachen to elect a king. Times had changed decidedly since the year 619, when Henry I received the crown. At his election only the Frankish duke Eberhard with his vassals and the archbishop Heriger of Mainz had appeared, besides the Saxon nobility. The whole kingdom took part in Otto's election; all the German dukes, the archbishops, and probably a great many other high clerical and secular dignitaries proceeded to Aachen. The Saxon lords who had already decided in favour of Otto accompanied him thither; as he approached, those who had already gathered in the city went out to meet him and brought him back in a triumphal procession. The election took place in the celebrated palace of Charlemagne. Between the castle and the court chapel (the beautiful church of the Virgin) was an open colonnade through which the great emperor had often passed on his way to church. In this place the secular lords chose Otto for their king; he seated himself here and at once caused them to bring him their homage; they placed their hands in his and swore to support him against the enemy. Otto then, in company with the princes, proceeded to the church of the Virgin, the much admired chapel of Charlemagne, which was built in the form of an octagon, in part from antique marble columns. Since the ground space would accommodate only a limited number of persons, a great many had mounted to the circular gallery-like passages above, in order to view the festive proceedings from there. There had been a quarrel among the archbishops at first as to which of them should crown the new ruler; finally it

[936–938 A.D.]

was agreed that this honour should fall to Hildebert of Mainz on account of the peculiar dignity of his person. The archbishop conducted Otto into the middle of the chapel and then turned to the audience: "See," he said, "I lead before you the new king, who has been selected by God, appointed by King Henry, and now chosen by all the princes; if this choice pleases you, so manifest it by raising the right hand." Thereupon the congregation raised their right hands and showed their assent by a loud cry of acclamation. The archbishop then led the new king to the altar upon which were the insignia of kingly office—the sword with the girdle, the purple robe, the bracelets, the staff, the sceptre, and the crown. He then turned to Otto and presented him with the insignia of power, together with many pious admonitions. "Receive this sword," said he, "in order with it to drive out all the enemies of Christ, the heathen, and all bad Christians, since God has given thee dominion over the Frankish realm in order to make of it a sure refuge for Christendom." After Otto had received the other royal insignia, accompanied with similar pious expressions, the archbishop of Mainz anointed him, being assisted by the archbishop Wikfried of Cologne, put the crown on his head, and conducted him to the throne, which was placed between the marble columns of the church of the Virgin. When the service was concluded the new king proceeded with the secular and clerical lords to the banquet which had been prepared in the palace of Charles the Great. The four dukes of the kingdom, Giselbert of Lorraine, Eberhard of Franconia, Hermann of Swabia, and Arnulf of Bavaria, had charge of the coronation festivities; they also waited on the king personally at the banquet as vassals were accustomed to wait on their feudal lord on especially ceremonious occasions.[b]

It was no empty formality when the princes who had once recognised his father as their feudal lord now rendered him the same service which they received from their dependents. Kingship already meant something more than mere leadership of the Saxon dukes, and Otto was just the man to assume the right which only one king had ever possessed in German territory. If Henry seems almost more Saxon prince than king of the Germans, Otto on the other hand, although he called himself also king of the Franks, was from the very beginning of his reign king of the Germans in the most complete sense of the word.[c]

### THE OVERTHROW OF THE STEM DUCHIES

A revival of the Carlovingian conception of sovereignty can at once be discerned in the mind of the young king. The coronation itself offered an opportunity for this to appear. The duke of Bavaria had not come to do him homage; Otto deposed him and set up, beside the duchy of Bavaria, a count palatine to watch that the interests of the king should never suffer from the independence of the great vassal. It was the beginning of a policy radically different from that of Henry, who had left almost complete autonomy to the different nations and their dukes. From now on till the time of Bismarck the main story of German history is the struggle of the kings for a centralised government, and the frustration of their efforts by the local magnates who represented the tribes and nations of the earliest days.

The story of Otto's wars against these great dukes is too long and too intricate to tell in detail here. Suffice it to say that every duke in the kingdom was in rebellion at one time and another. Even the Saxons turned

against them, and aided the rebellion of his elder but bastard brother Thankmar and his younger brother Henry, who was the eldest born of the children of Henry I after he was king. At first Otto was beaten, but in a victory at Andernach (Birten) the dukes of Franconia and Lorraine were slain, and the young Henry was forced to submit (939).

Then the great plan of Otto was realised. The power of the king was to be secured by setting up members of his own family in place of the stem dukes, whom the people had hitherto looked up to as sprung from the old race of heroes, and the only hereditary lords of the Germans. Franconia he kept for himself; Bavaria was given to the penitent brother Henry; Swabia was held by his eldest son, Ludolf; his son-in-law Conrad was put over Lorraine. But they were no longer the old independent sovereigns. The scattered estates of the king that spread throughout the different duchies offered the chance for a system of counts palatine who, like the *missi dominici* of Charlemagne, were to be the agents of royalty and centralisation, and to watch with jealous eye the actions of their neighbours, even if they were of the royal line. It was evident that another Charles was at the helm, but a second civil war had to be fought before the royal prerogatives were assured. Nothing shows more clearly the real tendencies of German history towards local liberty rather than imperial unity than the fact that the new dukes, the king's own kin, were soon leading the forces of their respective nations against Otto. But the rebels quarrelled among themselves, and an invasion of the Hungarians forced them to join in a common national defence. Otto, however, had learned that he could never rely upon the dukes, whoever they were. Traditions of local independence and tribal, or as they viewed it "national" interests, overcame all ties of blood or duty. Counts palatine were not strong enough to act as a sufficient check. They must be backed up by some other force, or the unity of the monarchy was doomed. The only available ally was the church, and with the same deep political purpose at heart Otto posed as the protector of the church and its reformer. His protection meant the exaltation of ecclesiastical lords to a plane equal to or above that of the lay lords; his reformation meant the placing of his brother, the learned Bruno, over the archiepiscopate of Cologne (953), and his son William in the place of the perfidious Frederick, the archbishop of Mainz, who had connived at a plan for Otto's assassination.

## THE TENTH CENTURY RENAISSANCE

These appointments were eminently just, no more attractive or saintly character appears in German history than that of Bruno, who as chancellor and as prelate carried out reforms that brought intellectual awakening with religious revival. Fostered by him, rare literature again began to be produced; the night of the dark age was passing, and Bruno, carrying his library with him in his travels, and studying Greek with the Scotchman Isreal, is like an Erasmus of the tenth century. His work was that of a reformer and teacher.[a]

Above all, however, Bruno attempted to revive the scholarly activity of the clergy. Through him and through the men whom he trained, the court again became the centre of a scholarly movement; the royal chapel took on the character of a superior school. Of the seven liberal sciences which at that time comprised the whole sum of earthly wisdom, only the three lower ones, grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics, had, since the memory of man, been

taught in the schools; that Bruno directed his studies to the four higher ones likewise, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy, made him appear like a restorer of these sciences in the eyes of his contemporaries. While he himself still continued to study, he became at the same time the teacher of many others; he never let the superiority of his mind be felt unpleasantly, but rather by his winning friendliness and gentle earnestness, succeeded in charming everyone. While he himself "hastened forward on the path of virtue with gigantic strides," as his biographer expresses it, he never wearied of looking back after those who were left behind, to help them on their way.

The scholarly efforts of the court gained in breadth and depth after Otto turned his attention to them, and they had already begun to bear fruit in the year 950. Soon afterwards the learned Rather was called to court. He was born in Lorraine, had left his home and made his fortune in Italy through King Hugo, but had been driven out of his bishopric at Verona. Bruno himself learned from Rather, who was held to be the first theologian of his time. Bishop Luitprand of Cremona came to court a little later, and also his not ordinary knowledge of old Latin literature does not seem to have been left unused by Bruno. It was no longer only the bones of the saints which were brought from over the Alps, but those other relics of antiquity which are so much more precious in our eyes; above all, the valuable manuscripts of classic authors. More than a hundred of these were brought into German countries by an Italian, Gunzo by name, at Otto's command, some of the most valuable of which Italy has carried back again after a lapse of centuries. People now applied themselves with fresh zeal to the study of the old poets, orators, and historians — Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Terence, Cicero, and Sallust arose together from the dead and became the teachers of the Germans in the liberal sciences.

From the court the new studies spread throughout the kingdom, the cloister schools especially taking a gratifying part in the general advancement. St. Gall and Reichenau reached their most flourishing period; Fulda tried to maintain its old position; Hersfeld emulated it; a teacher from Italy was called to Würzburg. In Saxony, Corvei especially cultivated the sciences; also in the convents, especially at Gandersheim and Quedlinburg, the girls read Virgil and Terence together with the lives of the saints. While people had scarcely learned to know the ancients, with minds still dazzled by the brilliancy of their oratory, they found courage to compete with them; behind cloister walls men put their hand to works which, with all their roughness, are not without a certain lofty beauty, which show a sturdy attempt to reach perfection of form, and which through their contents possess for us an imperishable value.

It is a literature of a peculiar character which was developed out of these efforts. It rests upon a national foundation and is yet clothed in a garment of classic Roman language; it is monastic and ascetic, but at the same time naturalistic according to the conception of the ancients; it is ecclesiastic, but untrammelled by dogmatic disputes and canonistic scholasticism; finally it is courtly, but at the same time simple, true-hearted, and upright. The old-German heroic folklore is reproduced in hexameters which are imitated or borrowed from Virgil; the naïve fables must accommodate themselves to the strict beat of old verse measure; the wonderful stories of the origin of the Saxons are repeated in the language of Sallust and Tacitus; a nun treats the legends of the saints in the form of a Terentian comedy. Bruno has stamped the impress of his mind upon this whole literature. His taste for philological learning, his ascetic zeal, his high position at court which came

to him from birth, influenced it perceptibly for over a century. But there was also another spirit at work which he neither could nor would control. In these books lives also the strong, sturdy, and true spirit of the German people.

The tenth century, more than others, has been called an age of barbarism, and its beginnings do indeed betray a decay of all that the Carlovingian period had accomplished in the way of art and literature. But already in the middle of the century we may detect new seeds of culture in the German countries, and it was really from them that a civilisation first developed which penetrated more deeply into the northern districts and became acclimated there. It was, to be sure, a civilisation which at first affected only the highest ranks of society — the court, the clergy, and the nobility which had been drawn into the vicinity of the court; but it was practically instrumental in gradually reforming all the conditions of German life. No one more than the historian of the German people perceives what a change took place at that time in the cultural conditions. After he has emerged from the darkness of tradition into the light of history already in the Carlovingian period, at the beginning of the tenth century he is again surrounded by a twilight in which it is impossible to distinguish fact from fable; tradition is confused, contradictory, incomplete, and disconnected. But with the middle of the century, contemporary, reliable sources are again opened up to him, which on the whole permit him to follow the course of events clearly; the ground becomes firm beneath his feet and only seldom is he compelled to tread the uncertain path of supposition.

The king's chapel, however, was not only a school of learning, it was at the same time a plant-house for church and state, in that nearly all the priests went out from it who in the following period were raised to the seats of the German bishoprics by Otto and his successors. It is a new generation of princes of the church very unlike that which the later Carlovingian period had brought forth. These bishops, permeated as they are with the dignity of their ecclesiastical position, are yet truly submissive to the central power of the state; they willingly take part in the king's battles and cheerfully go from one country to another in his interest and for his advantage. Hierarchic-theocratic ideas are far from their minds, no less so the thought of a slavish obedience to Rome, although they respect the rights of St. Peter; they are, however, permeated with the feeling of a free independent authority which God has given them over their bishoprics, and they rule their dioceses with a patriarchal, all-comprehending power. Their first duties they consider to be the organisation of ecclesiastical discipline, reformation of the cloisters and chapters, and the awakening of a scholastic life; but they feel it to be equally their calling to fortify their cities with walls, to gain or to secure for them privileges of markets and coinage, to elevate commerce, to cultivate waste regions, to clear away forests, to regulate the service of their dependents legally, to preserve right and justice within their immunities. They are throughout practical tasks which they set themselves and they believe that they are serving God and their fellowmen in performing them.

The Roman church has placed not a few of these bishops on the calendar of its saints, but the German people also owe these men the deepest gratitude. They have contributed not a little towards raising the oppressed part of the nation, towards reviving city life, and towards promoting agriculture, indeed one might say that even the more definite development of the national spirit is due largely to them. From one centre they went into all parts of the realm; wherever they went they spread the same culture, the same principles

of administration, the same ecclesiastical-political views, and they themselves remained, although separated, in a close, often an intimate, relationship with each other. It might be said that among them for the first time, the firm outlines of a national policy were established, which remained untouched by the attitude of the person who happened to hold the chief power in the state. In this rank of bishops we meet a large number of the most worthy men, who showed themselves almost throughout filled with the same love for their German fatherland until the struggle concerning the investiture brought unholy discord into all ranks of life.[c]

### THE STRENGTHENING OF THE MARKS

But civil wars, the strengthening of royalty, and the activity of the church were but a part of the interests of Otto. From the day of his coronation the Slavs had been ravaging the frontiers on the northeast and the Hungarians had raided the rich valleys of the upper Danube. In campaign after campaign the king and his lieutenants kept the invaders at bay. To secure his kingdom, Otto granted larger powers to the counts of the border, the markgrafen, and thus prepared the way for the power of Brandenburg and of Austria (the East Mark). He encouraged German colonisation along the Elbe, and called to the assistance of his armies the influence of Christianising missionaries. The reformation of his clergy stood him in good stead, for not since the day of Charles the Great did the missionary effort of the monks and clergy reap such triumphs over heathenism and win so much in land and people for Christendom.

### VICTORY OVER THE MAGYARS AND WENDS

But the Hungarians were still unsubdued, and in the year 955 they made a vast and final test of the strength of the new kingdom.[a] A powerful party in Bavaria, headed by the count Werner, brother to the fallen Arnulf, were induced by the hatred they bore to Henry to have recourse to the Hungarians, whom they invited into the country. Confident of success on account of their enormous numerical strength, the arrogant barbarians boasted that their horses should drain every river in Germany. Augsburg, whose supposed treasures attracted their cupidity, was besieged by them, but made a brave defence under the command of Burkhard of Swabia. Their king, Pulzko, was encamped at Günsburg. Otto instantly assembled the arrière-ban of the entire empire; the Bohemians united their forces with his; the Saxons, at that time engaged in opposing the Slavs, alone failed. The two armies came within sight of each other on the Lech, near Augsburg. Before the battle commenced, Otto addressed his troops, as his father had done on a similar occasion, and vowed, when referring to the victory won by Henry, to found a bishopric at Meresburg, if God granted him success.

It was the 10th of August, 955. The sun poured with intense heat upon the plain. The Hungarians rapidly crossed the Lech, fell upon the rear of the German army, dispersed the Bohemians, and were pressing hard upon the Swabians, when the fortune of the day was again turned by Conrad, who, anxious to retrieve his fault and to regain the confidence of his master, performed miracles of valour at the head of the Franconians. The emperor struggled sword in hand in the thickest of the fight. A vast number of

the enemy were drowned in attempting to escape across the river. Conrad was mortally wounded in the neck by an arrow aimed at him by one of the fugitives, when in the act of raising his helmet in order to breathe more freely. A hundred thousand Hungarians are said to have fallen on this occasion.[1] Two of their princes, Lehel and Bulcs, were by the emperor's command hanged on the gates of Augsburg. According to some writers, King Pulzko and four of the war-chiefs were hanged before the gates of Ratisbon. Werner was killed by the enraged Hungarians, but few of whom escaped to their country, almost the whole of the fugitives being slain or hunted down like wild beasts by the Bavarian peasants. The adherents of the adverse party were mercilessly punished by Henry of Bavaria, who caused them to be buried alive, or burned in beds of quicklime. Herold, bishop of Salzburg, was by his orders deprived of sight, and the patriarch Lupus of Aquileia met with a still more wretched fate. This was the last inroad attempted by the Hungarians, who for the future remained within their frontier, on their side equally undisturbed by the Germans. The booty was so enormous that a peasant is said to have had a silver plough made out of his share. The innumerable Hungarian horses taken on this occasion also gave rise to the establishment of the Keferloher horse fair.*d*

GERMAN PEASANT OF THE TENTH CENTURY

### THE REVIVAL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

For a quarter of a century Otto (936–962) ruled with no higher title than king of the Franks. It was not till the winter of 962 that this successor of Charlemagne received the imperial crown, and proclaimed once more to the world the fact of that union of Roman and Teuton, upon which the structure of modern society was to rest. We have now to trace the story of what Bryce regards as the real foundation of the Roman Empire of the Middle Ages.

The one portion of the Carlovingian monarchy which suffered most in the dark age of dissolution was Italy. The heroic efforts on its behalf of Louis II, the last worthy descendant of Charles, were rendered fruitless by his early death without a son to succeed. Then Italy was a prize for uncles and cousins, like Charles the Bald and Charles the Fat. After their time there was a feudal anarchy in which the most noteworthy leaders were the dukes of Friuli in the north, of Spoleto in the centre, and of Capua and Benevento in the south, with marquises of Ivrea and Tuscany and proud Roman counts, like those of the family of Crescentius, to prevent consolidation or peace. At Rome itself the conditions were at the worst. Popes were elected by clergy and populace, but mob violence forced the elections amid riot and outrage.

[1 But one must remember that the old chronicler who recorded this fact did not see the battle.]

Above this world of ruin and disorder there still hung the shadow of an imperial crown. From the year 900 it had been alternately the prize of Lombard and Provençal (or Burgundian) princes.[1]

In the year 950 Lothair of Burgundy died suddenly, leaving his young, witty, and beautiful widow Adelheid (Adelaide) to face the craft and strength of Berengar II. Berengar determined to marry her to his son, and upon her refusal imprisoned her in a fortress on the Lake of Como. From this she escaped to the castle of Canossa.

Legend tells us that her deliverance was due to a priest who bored through her prison wall, and that in her flight she was so closely pursued as to be compelled to conceal herself in a field of standing corn. Her flight at Canossa gave the excuse for the interference of the German ally, Ludolf of Swabia, Otto's eldest son. Ludolf at once descended the Alps; his uncle Henry of Bavaria was at his heels to share in the plunder, and laid claim to most of Venetia, although formerly Berengar's ally. But the prize was for neither of them. In 951 Otto himself came down, and in Pavia, the old royal city of the Lombards, he signalised his double triumph by assuming the title "king of the Lombards" and by marrying the fair Adelaide. Henceforth the only obstacle to the assumption of the empire was the formality of coronation.

Nine years elapsed, however, before Otto took the final step. His son had withdrawn to Germany to lead a formidable rebellion against the father who had foiled his plans. Conrad the red, duke of Lotharingia, joined hands with him, and the civil wars broke out anew. It was then that the great Hungarian invasion came to restore allegiance to the one prince who could make headway against it. The rebels submitted and fought loyally for their king. The battle of Lechfeld left Otto unquestioned master in Germany. Fresh aggressions of Berengar, whom he had left as under-king in Italy, now led him to take the final step.[a]

Berengar aimed at the independent sovereignty of Italy, in which he was upheld by the majority of the people, whose national pride ill brooked the despotic rule of either the clergy or the Germans. The Lombard bishops, enraged at the restriction imposed upon them by Berengar, sought the protection of the pope, who applied for aid to the emperor. The family disputes that had so lately troubled Otto's domestic peace, the struggle with the Hungarians and the Slavs, had at this juncture been brought to a favourable termination, and the reincorporation of Italy with the empire again became the object of his ambition. Accordingly, after causing his son, Otto II, to be crowned king of Germany at Aachen, and entrusting the government of the empire to his brother Bruno, archbishop of Cologne, and to his illegitimate son Wilhelm, who had succeeded Frederick in the archbishopric of Mainz, he crossed the Alps (961 A.D.), expelled Berengar, and for the first time entered Rome, where the pope, John XII (a son of Alberic), was compelled to crown him emperor.[d]

### THE IMPERIAL CORONATION (962 A.D.)

Ancient custom demanded that the pope should send the Roman senate, *i.e.* the nobility of the city, and the citizens who bore arms to meet the king, who was to receive the imperial crown, while he was encamped upon the gardens of Nero under Monte Mario near the church of St. Peter, and to

[1 Though it would seem that some of these claimants preferred a royal title to the imperial one. Cf. Otto I's first Italian campaign.]

escort him back to the city. This delegation, accordingly, started out in pompous array with crosses and flags, dragon heads, and lofty standards, accompanied by the corporations of the foreigners in Rome, each hailing the joyful occasion by joyful songs in its own language. Aristocratic youths belonging to the first families of the city, welcomed the king at Monte Mario, kissed his feet, and then assisted him to mount a horse sent by the pope, upon which they conducted him, through crowds of people, to the steps leading to the outer court of St. Peter's.

Before this sat the pope in full regalia, upon a golden throne surrounded on both sides by the clergy. After the king had left his horse and mounted the thirty-five marble steps, the pope arose, offered the king his lips for a kiss, and extended his right hand in brotherly greeting. They then passed through the brazen gates of the spacious outer court, which was called the paradise of St. Peter, and proceeded towards the main door — it was called the silver door — of the church. Before that was opened, however, the king swore to the pope that he had come with pure and upright intentions as regards the good of the city and church, and promised him the donations given by the earlier emperors. To the sound of the hymn, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," they then entered the festively decorated and brilliantly lighted church, which had no equal in all the world. The king hurried to the tomb of St. Peter as soon as he entered the church and fell on his knees to pray. The pope's blessing and prayer concluded the ceremony in the church. This was followed by a festive banquet which the pope gave the future emperor, who then returned in the evening to his camp outside the city.

Thus was spent the day of the ceremonial reception; the coronation itself did not take place until the following Sunday. On that day the people gathered in the streets at an early hour; all the houses were decorated with carpets and awnings; the whole city thereby took on a festive appearance. Everybody then hastened to Leo's city, to St. Peter's, where the king in a purple robe and golden greaves awaited the pope. The pope appeared in the full regalia of his highest priestly office. After the king had then put on clerical garments, he was anointed as a priest at the altar and thus, as a member of the clerical order, received the imperial crown and sword from the hands of the pope.

The church re-echoed with the loud congratulations and the joyful cries of the crowd. As soon as these had subsided a lector read the document which the emperor had made out for the pope in regard to the possessions of St. Peter's and the emperor with splendid gifts thanked Peter's successor, who had adorned his head with the highest crown in the world.

With such festivities King Berengar had been received in Rome and crowned emperor. We possess no details concerning Otto's reception and coronation; but the proceedings could not have been very different when he entered Rome on the 31st of January, and on February 2nd, 962, received the imperial crown from the pope in St. Peter's; with him Adelheid was anointed and crowned.

Otto had attained the aim of long years of labour. The highest position in western Christendom, the leadership of all the states which had gone out from the empire of Charlemagne, had become his and through him they became the possessions of the German nation.[c]

In 964 Otto returned to Germany, and held Whitsuntide at Cologne, where he was attended by all the German princes, among whom appeared Lothair of France. Peace and security reigned throughout the empire.

[966-972 A.D.]

WARS IN ITALY AGAINST BYZANTIUM

Otto revisited Italy (966 A.D.), where Adalbert, the son of Berengar, had raised an insurrection in Lombardy; he was defeated on the Po by Burkhard of Swabia. Pope Leo VIII was dead; the new pope, John XIII, the emperor's creature, who had been expelled from Rome by an adverse party, had been reinstated by Pandolf, the valiant prince of Benevento, the last Lombard who preserved his ancestral bravery and fidelity amid the vices of Italy. Otto's first act, on his arrival in Rome, was the infliction of a severe chastisement on the refractory Romans; thirteen of the most distinguished citizens were hanged. A fresh and closer treaty was concluded between the emperor and the pope, to whose dominions the territory of Ravenna, which had been severed from them, was restored, in return for which he solemnly placed the imperial diadem on the head of Otto II, an incident of rare occurrence during the lifetime and in the presence of the father.

All opposition to the irresistible power of the emperor had now ceased — the whole of upper and central Italy lay in silent submission at his feet. His first step was the imposition of a new form of government upon Lombardy. He replaced the great dukes, with the exception of his ally Pandolf, by numerous petty markgrafs, the majority of whom were Germans by birth, He also settled a considerable number of Germans in the different cities, and thus created a party favourable to the imperial cause that counterpoised the rebellious spirit of the Lombards and Romans. Pandolf of Benevento, surnamed Ironhead, and the petty duke, Gisulf of Salerno, whose imbecility rendered him ever inconstant to his allies, defended the frontiers of upper and central Italy against the Greeks, who still retained possession of lower Italy, and the Saracens, who had already settled in Sicily. Otto and his empress, Adelheid, visited Pandolf (968 A.D.) who entertained them with great magnificence.

During his residence at Benevento, Otto undertook the conquest of lower Italy. Bari, the strongly fortified Grecian metropolis, offering a valiant and successful resistance, he had recourse to his favourite policy, and despatched his confidant, Liutprand, the celebrated historian, to the court of Nicephorus, the Grecian emperor, in order to demand the hand of the beautiful princess Theophano, daughter to Romanus the late emperor, for his son Otto II, probably in the hope of receiving Italy as her dowry. His suit being contemptuously refused, Otto undertook a second campaign during the following year, and chose with great judgment his line of march along the Alps that separate lower Italy into two parts, and thus command Apulia to the east and Calabria to the west. Having thus opened a path, he returned the same way, leaving the conquest of the low country to Pandolf, who having the misfortune to be taken prisoner before Bovino, and to be sent to Constantinople, the Greeks, under the patrician Eugenius, crossed the frontier, laid waste the country in the neighbourhood of Capua and Benevento, and treated the inhabitants with great cruelty. Otto, who was at that juncture in upper Italy, sent the grafs Gunther and Siegfried to oppose them; a splendid victory was gained, and the victors, animated by a spirit of revenge, deprived the Greek prisoners of their right hands, noses, and ears. In 970, the Sicilian Saracens invaded the country, but were defeated at Chiaramonte by Graf Gunther. At this time, the emperor Joannes, who after the assassination of Nicephorus had ascended the throne of Greece, restored Pandolf Ironhead to liberty, concluded peace with Otto, and consented to the alliance of Otto II with the beautiful

Theophano, who was escorted from Constantinople by the archbishop Gero of Cologne, Bruno's successor, at the head of a numerous body of retainers.

She was received in the palace of Pandolf at Benevento by the emperor and the youthful bridegroom. Her extraordinary beauty attracted universal admiration. The marriage ceremony was celebrated with great magnificence at Rome (972 A.D.). This princess created an important change in the manners of Germany by the introduction of Grecian customs, which gradually spreading downwards from the court, where her influence was first felt, affected the general habits of the people by the alterations introduced in the monastic academies. The German court adopted much of the pomp and etiquette of that of Greece. The number of retainers increased with increasing luxury, and the plain manners of the true-hearted German were exchanged for the finesse and adulation of the courtier. The emperor also adopted the Grecian title of "sacred majesty" (*sacra majestas*). Lower Italy remained in the hands of the Greeks.*d*

## COMPARISON OF HENRY THE FOWLER AND OTTO WITH CHARLEMAGNE

The feeling of his unassailable position may have cheered the emperor on the journey to his own palatinate and church, at Memleben on the Unstrut, where the river, peaceful and calm on the surface but flowing strongly in its depths, winds its way out of the valley through the neighbouring mountains, which have still kept the name they bore in the days of antiquity. It is supposed to have been an ancient Germanic burial-place. He arrived there on the 6th of May, 973. It has rather been supposed that he came there with a foreboding of death. But death hovered over him. On the 7th he still kept the hours for prayer, not without interruption for rest and for "offering his hand to the poor," as the chronicle says.

He seemed cheerful at table. Whilst he was listening to the singing of the Gospel at vespers, he was seized by the horror of death. Overcome by heat and weakness, he was placed on a seat, received the Communion, and died without any previous illness or death struggle. Thus the man who might have been considered as the ruler of all the western world, unexpectedly suffered the fate of mortals. The fullness of an inexhaustible vigour accompanied him to the end of his life, when it was suddenly conquered. He was only sixty-one years of age when he expired; his father had died at about the same age, in the same place, after a most active life.

Let us, even at the danger of repetition, add a few remarks concerning the position in the world of these two great men.

They had been preceded by Pepin and Charles the Great, likewise father and son, through whose succession and co-operation the West received its definite form. That which the father had planned, the son carried out with circumspect politics and the fortune of arms; under his long and peaceful administration the Western Empire was formed. The relations were not quite the same between Henry and Otto. Of Henry nothing is to be found from which one can conclude that his plans were the foundations of his son's actions. But succeeding each other under altered circumstances, they obtained the greatest success. To them is due the fact that the Carlovingian kingdom was sustained. Father and son worked together to banish the most dangerous enemies by which Germany was at any time attacked. Through Otto, Italy again became closely united with the empire, and western France

kept in peaceful relation to it. The western world, its power and civilisation, depended on the union of the three great lands.

For the consolidation of the empire the union of Charles the Great with the papacy was most essential; the ecclesiastical and temporal interests co-operated. The church belonged to the Latin world; but it had a lasting effect on the Germanic tribes. It united their religious views with the idea of the apostolic mission of St. Peter, and with the traditions of antiquity. Thus Saxony, which Charles subjected with arms, was organised as an ecclesiastical province; Bavaria was subjected by direct influence of the pope to the great kingdom which then became the empire — that is to say, the constitution of the empire, embracing as it did Latin elements, did not take place without the influence of the pope. Nevertheless the personal authority of a great prince was necessary to keep all his provinces in unity.

A GERMAN CHIEF

Since then, as has been remarked, a considerable alteration took place. The opposition descended from antiquity between the priesthood and the higher authorities had again broken out; the priesthood had acquired a development and strength, with which the temporal power in the hands of the Carlovingians could no longer interfere. In Germany the hierarchical doctrines were also to the fore, and it might well have seemed possible that the essence of the German spirit had been absorbed by them. But how was it to escape this absorption? There can be no doubt that it was owing chiefly to the establishment of a princely house which was essentially Germanic and completely realised the idea of temporal power. The empire which Henry I conquered and Otto the Great raised to a magnificent structure, had a Germanic vein of preponderating strength and keenness; it gave back authority to temporal power — not alone the supreme authority but also the subordinate authority attending it, and was joined by those bishops who were free from the power of the pope at Rome, until now absolute. Had an unconditional subjection of the clergy taken place, this would have shattered the foundation of the empire. The religious idea was not fought by the Saxon princes, but ecclesiastical politics underwent a change. The object now was to insure the independence of the imperial and kingly authority and to save it from clerical interference in the government.

It strove for a juxtaposition of the two authorities with a preponderance of the temporal. This was the principle of the German Empire which was autonomically raised by Henry and Otto on the foundation of the Carlovingian. The relations of the European nations were reorganised by the unification of Germany. In England and France they had not been so fortunate as in Germany; the northern invasions had not been repelled, the nationalities had even become altered under their influence. They had other

requirements, other centres. The rising of the temporal power in itself created new foundations for them.

If the empire aspired to universal authority, this attempt would have to be given up. A complete nullification of the papal authority would have been unbearable to the German Empire, and the neighbouring nations were far from being disposed to subject themselves to such a central superiority as would thus have arisen. Awakened national feeling laid the foundations of the German Empire, though religion was not without its effect. In the course of the following century the latter gained in intensity. From all these causes resulted the complex civilisation which we call Western Christianity; since thenceforward chaotic forces and tendencies progressed towards unification. The state thus founded became the basis for modern civilisation.[e]

## THE UNFORESEEN EVILS OF OTTO'S REIGN

By far the most important act of Otto's eventful life was his assumption of the Lombard and the imperial crowns. His successors so steadily followed his example that the sovereign crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle claimed as his right to be afterwards crowned in Milan and in Rome. Thus grew up the Holy Roman Empire, that strange state which, directly descending through the empire of Charles the Great from the empire of the cæsars, contained so many elements foreign to ancient life. We are here concerned with it only in so far as it affected Germany. Germany itself never until the nineteenth century became an empire. It is true that at least the Holy Roman Empire was as a matter of fact confined to Germany; but in theory it was something quite different. Like France, Germany was a kingdom, but it differed from France in this, that its king was also king in Italy, and Roman emperor. As the latter title made him nominally the secular lord of the world, it might have been expected to excite the pride of his German subjects; and doubtless, after a time, they did learn to think highly of themselves as the imperial race. But the evidence tends to show that at first they had no wish for this honour, and would have much preferred had their ruler limited himself strictly to his own people. There are signs that during Otto's reign they began to have a distinct consciousness of national life, their use of the word "deutsch," to indicate the whole people, being one of these symptoms.

To the connection of their kingdom with the empire they owe the fact that for centuries they were the most divided of European nations. France was made up of a number of loosely connected lands, each with its own lord, when Germany, under Otto, was to a large extent moved by a single will, well organised, and strong. But the attention of the French kings was concentrated on their immediate interests, and in course of time they brought their unruly vassals to order. The German kings, as emperors, had duties which often took them away for long periods from Germany. This alone would have shaken their authority, for during their absence, the great vassals seized rights which it was afterwards difficult to recover. Thus the imperial crown was the most fatal gift that could have been offered to the German kings; apparently giving them all things, it deprived them nearly of everything. And in doing this, it inflicted on many generations incalculable and needless suffering.

By the policy of his later years, Otto did much to prepare the way for the process of disintegration which he rendered inevitable by restoring the

CHARLEMAGNE AND THE SCHOLARS

(From the painting by Blaas)

empire. With the kingdom divided into five great duchies, the sovereign could always have maintained at least so much unity as King Henry secured; and as the experience of Otto himself showed, there would have been chances of much greater centralisation. Yet he threw away this advantage. Otto gave up the practice of retaining the duchies either in his own hands or in those of relatives. Even Saxony, his native duchy, and the chief source of his strength, was given to Markgraf Billung, whose family long afterwards kept it.

As a set-off to the power of the princes — for the reigning immediate vassals of the crown ranked as princes — Otto, especially after he became emperor and looked upon himself as the protector of the church, immensely increased the importance of the prelates. The emperor's idea was that, as church lands and offices could not be hereditary, their holders would necessarily favour the crown. But he forgot that the church had a head beyond Germany, and that the passion for the rights of an order may be no less intense than that for the rights of a family. While the empire was at peace with the popes, the prelates of the church did strongly uphold it, and their influence was unquestionably, on the whole, much higher than that of rude secular nobles.

But with the empire and the papacy in conflict, they could not but abide, as a rule, by the authority which had the most sacred claims to their loyalty. From all these circumstances it curiously happened that the sovereign who did more than any other to raise the royal power, was also the sovereign who, more than any other, wrought its decay.*f*

## OTTO II (973-983 A.D.)

Otto II was short in stature, but strong and muscular, and of an extremely ruddy complexion; his temperament was fiery, but modified by the refined and learned education he had received, for which he was indebted to the care of his mother, Adelheid; his wife, Theophano, also sympathised in his love of learning. Still, the Italian blood that flowed in his veins estranged him too much from Germany, and excited in him so strong an inclination for the south, that it became as impossible for his mind to be completely absorbed by care for the empire as it was for his rough but honest German subjects to adopt the pomp and refinement of his court.

Swabia, on the death of the pious Hedwig, was inherited by Otto, the son of Ludolf, between whom and Henry the Wrangler, of Bavaria, the ancient feud that had arisen on account of the extent of their frontiers between their fathers was still carried on. The emperor decided the question in Otto's favour and the quarrelsome Henry instantly attempted to rouse the ancient national hatred of the Bavarians, and to stir them up to open revolt. He also entered into alliance with Boleslaw of Bohemia, but was anticipated in his designs by Otto, who threw him into prison, bestowed Bavaria on Otto of Swabia, and Carinthia on a graf, Henry Minor, the son of Berthold, probably a Babenberger; this graf sided with Henry of Bavaria, revolted, and was deposed, 974 A.D. Carinthia was consequently also bestowed upon Otto. In the following year, Harold, king of Denmark, suddenly invaded Saxony, whence he was successfully repulsed. Shortly after this event, Henry escaped from prison, again raised the standard of rebellion, and was joined by the Bohemians, but again suffered defeat, and was retaken prisoner (977 A.D.).

### OTTO IN FRANCE AND ITALY

In 978 A.D. war again broke out in the West, where Charles, the brother of Lothair, king of France, attempted to gain possession of Lorraine, but was repulsed by Otto, who advanced as far as Paris, and burned the suburbs. The city, nevertheless, withstood his attack; and on his return homewards, being surprised by the treacherous count of Hennegau, he was compelled to come to terms with his opponents; Charles was permitted to hold lower Lorraine in fee of the empire, and upper Lorraine was granted to Frederick, count of Bar.

Otto, whose natural inclinations led him to Italy, was speedily called there by the affairs of that country. Crescentius (Cencius) had usurped the government in Rome, and attempted to revive the memory of ancient times by causing himself to be created consul. The pope, Benedict VII, was assassinated by his orders, and replaced by a creature of his own, Bonifacius VII, in opposition to whom the Tuscan imperialists raised Benedict VIII to the papal chair. Otto's presence in Rome (980 A.D.) quickly restored order. Crescentius was pardoned. Otto was visited during his stay in Rome by Hugh Capet, Lothair's secret competitor for the throne of France, whose claim was countenanced by the emperor, on account of the ingratitude displayed by the French monarch for the services formerly rendered to his ancestors by the imperial house of Saxony.

Lower Italy next engaged the attention of the emperor, who attempted to take forcible possession of his wife's portion. The Greeks, until now unceasingly at war with the Arabs, instantly united with them against their common enemy. Naples and Taranto were taken by Otto, and the allies were defeated near Cotrona (981 A.D.); Abul Kasim, the terror of lower Italy, and numbers of the Arabs, were left on the field of battle. The following campaign proved disastrous to the emperor, who, whilst engaged in a conflict with the Greeks on the seashore near Basantello, not far from Taranto, was suddenly attacked in the rear by the Arabs, and so completely routed that he was compelled to fly for his life, and owed his escape entirely to the rapidity of his horse. When wandering along the shore in momentary expectation of being captured by the enemy, he caught sight of a Grecian vessel, towards which he swam on horseback, in the hope of not being recognised by those on board. He was taken up. A slave recognised him, but instead of betraying him passed him off as one of the emperor's chamberlains. The Greeks made for Rossano with the intention of taking on board the treasures of the pretended chamberlain, who, the instant the vessel approached the shore, suddenly leaped into the sea and escaped.

Lower Italy remained in the hands of the Greeks, and was governed by an exarch. The Arabians also retained possession of Sicily.

### QUELLING OF THE SLAVS

Mistevoi, the valiant prince of the Abodriti, favoured the Christian religion, followed the banner of Otto II, and served under him in Italy; on his return to his native country, he sued for the hand of Mechtildis, the sister of Bernhard of Saxony, and on being insulted by the jealous Dietrich, who called him a dog and unworthy of a Christian or of a German bride, replied: "If we Slavs be dogs, we will prove to you that we can bite." The pagan Slavs, who were ever ripe for revolt, obeyed his call the more readily,

on account of the death of Ditmar, who with many other of their tyrannical rulers had fallen in the Italian war. An oath of eternal enmity against the Germans and the priests was taken before their idol, Radegast, and suddenly rising in open rebellion, they assassinated all who fell into their hands (983 A.D.), razed all the churches to the ground, and completely destroyed the cities of Hamburg and Oldenburg, besides those of Brandenburg and Havelburg.

The lands of Dietrich became one scene of desolation. Sixty priests were flayed alive. The rebels were, nevertheless, completely beaten by Dietrich and Riddag in a pitched battle near Tangermünde. The emperor, however, more just than his father had been, deprived the cruel Dietrich of his government, and bestowed it on Hodo. Riddag and his cousin, the abovementioned graf Dedo, remained in Meissen, whence Riddag was afterwards expelled by the Bohemians. It was regained by his cousin and successor, the brave Eckhart, whose exploits were equalled by those of Bernhard Billung, who had returned from Italy in order to oppose the Abodriti on the western frontier. The obstinacy with which the Slavs, notwithstanding the terrible defeats, still held out, is proved by the fact of Brandenburg having been first retaken in 994.

The peaceable conversion of the Bohemians and Poles chiefly contributed to the gradual but complete subjection of the Slavs on the frontiers. The independence of Bohemia and Poland was only possible so long as the powerful Slavonic pagan states existed to their rear. This support was now lost. Poland was already Christianised, and the bishop of Prague, Adalbert, was a celebrated Bohemian saint. It was also about this period that Christianity took firm footing in Denmark, although not without fierce struggles.

Great changes took place also at this period in France. Lothair died (986 A.D.), and in the following year his only son, Louis V. Charles of Lorraine, Lothair's brother, aspired to the throne, but was excluded by the Capetian party. The disesteem in which he was held on account of his licentious habits, and the refusal of assistance from Germany, where the emperor, dissatisfied with the conduct of Lothair, no longer favoured the Carlovingians, rendered him defenceless; he fell into the hands of his rival, Hugh Capet, and died in prison (993 A.D.). His son Otto, the last of the Carlovingian race, died, neglected and despised (1004 A.D.).

### OTTO III (983–1002 A.D.)

The death of Otto II, which was occasioned by the hardships he had undergone at Basantello, took place in Italy (983 A.D.). His son Otto III, a child three years of age, was named as his successor, under the joint guardianship of Theophano and Adelheid, who gave him such a learned education that he received the appellation of the *Wunderkind*, on account of the precocity of his intellect.

Henry the Wrangler, who aspired to the throne, and seized the person of the young monarch, had already, by his conduct, estranged from himself his countrymen the Saxons; the memory of the cruelties practised by his father also rendered him unpopular in Bavaria, and he was speedily reduced to submission by the Franconian party, at whose head stood Willigis, the learned archbishop of Mainz. He was the son of a wheelwright, and adopted a wheel for the arms of the archbishopric, with these words, "Willigis, Willigis, remember thy origin." Next in rank to this spiritual head of the empire

stood Conrad, duke of Franconia and Swabia, and Henry, duke of Bavaria. Henry the Wrangler was compelled to deliver up the emperor, and to take the oath of allegiance to him, in consideration of which he was restored to the dukedom of Bavaria, on the death of Henry Minor. The mere of Austria was granted to Leopold I, grandson to Adalbert of Babenberg, whom Hatto had betrayed. This brave markgraf displayed so much activity that in 983 he had driven the Hungarians from the Ems, taken their royal castle of Mölk, and compelled them to keep within the limits of modern Hungary. Their king Geisa followed the example of the sovereigns of Bohemia and Poland, and received baptism from the hands of Pilgerin, bishop of Passau; he also sought to preserve peaceful relations with the Germanic Empire; Christianity, nevertheless, first became the national religion during the reign of his son, St. Stephen, who ascended the throne in 997 A.D., and died in 1038 A.D. This monarch married Gisela, the daughter of Henry the Wrangler, a union that strengthened his alliance with Germany. Leopold planted numerous German colonists in lower Austria, the country regained by him from the Hungarians, which was visited by fresh missionaries, who there left imperishable records of their zeal.

The sceptre of Germany was no sooner again held by a child, than the clergy and the great vassals of the empire sought to regain the power of which they had been deprived during the preceding reigns. The youthful emperor, guided by his mother and grandmother, who greatly favoured the clergy, bestowed upon them rich lands and benefices. Peace was certainly maintained throughout the empire, the dukes contenting themselves with confirming their power in the interior of the state, unopposed by the emperor. War was, however, still carried on, on the Slavonic frontier, where Otto was occasionally allowed to appear in person, in order that he might have opportunity by deeds of valour to gain his spurs.

## OTTO III MAKES AND UNMAKES POPES

Theophano and Adelheid, whose thoughts were ever directed towards Italy, their native land, had not been idle in their endeavours to rouse the ambition of the youthful Otto, who, on attaining his majority, aspired to the sovereignty of that country, where after the death of Otto II the Italian party again rose in opposition to that of the emperor. Crescentius, who had usurped unlimited power in Rome, caused the pope, John XIV, to be assassinated, and expelled his successor, John XV, who convoked an extraordinary council at Rheims (995 A.D.).

The German bishops and the pope, enraged at this conduct, unanimously condemned him at the council at Rheims, and he was compelled to yield. The pope expired during the following year, and the emperor marched into Italy for the purpose of regulating the affairs of the church. Crescentius was speedily overcome and pardoned. Otto, fired by youthful enthusiasm, imagined that the future happiness of the world was to be secured by a closer union of the imperial with the papal power, and with his own hand, although himself scarcely out of his boyhood, placed the tiara on the head of Bruno, the son of Otto of Carinthia, who was then in his four-and-twentieth year, and who received the name of Gregory V.

Scarcely had the emperor quitted Rome, than Crescentius again raised the banner of insurrection, inflamed all the dark and fiendlike passions of the Roman populace, already indignant at the assumption of the tiara

by a stranger, and elected another Italian wretch, John XVI, pope. The emperor instantly returned, and re-entering Rome, where his presence alone sufficed to calm the uproar, caused the pretender to the popedom to be deprived of sight, and to be led through the city mounted on an ass. Crescentius, who had vainly thrown himself into the Engelburg, was executed (998 A.D.). The well-founded hopes of the German party were, however, doomed to be frustrated by Italian wiles, and it is only left for us to imagine what Europe might have become, had these two noble-minded youths been entrusted for a longer period with her temporal and spiritual welfare.

The Pope, Gregory V, expired suddenly in 999 A.D. His death was, with great justice, ascribed to poison. Gerbert became his successor, under the name of Silvester II. His deep science and learning caused him to be generally regarded as a wizard.

The death of Gregory, the friend of his youth, caused a deep dejection to prey upon the mind of the emperor, which was also worked upon by the exhortations of two Italian enthusiasts, the saints Romwald and Nilus, who gained great power over him, and who, being the fellow-countrymen of Crescentius, reproved him most particularly for the severity with which he had treated that traitor, which severity they denounced as a crime.

The emperor was at length induced to do penance for fourteen days in a cavern sacred to the archangel Michael, on the Monte Gargano, in Apulia, and to perform a pilgrimage to the bones of St. Adalbert at Gnesen, in Poland. He nevertheless reappeared here in his character as emperor, by more strongly cementing the amicable relations that already subsisted between Germany and Poland. He bestowed the title of king on Boleslaw Chrobry, the son of Miseko and the Bohemian Dhobrowa.[d]

A GERMAN ARCHER

Otto acted in regard to the Hungarians in precisely the same way that his brother-in-law had shortly before this done at Constantinople with regard to the Russians. We perceive that the house of the Porphyrogeniti, to which Otto belonged on his mother's side, appears closely connected with the spread of Christianity, both towards the east from Constantinople and in the Western Empire from Rome. It was fated that one kingdom should unite itself with eastern, and that the other should unite itself with western christendom. Both were in the hands of the purple-born (Porphyrogeniti) family, and a fresh division between the Eastern and the Western empires on the old lines resulted, as the Byzantines extended their influence neither to Hungary nor to Poland, but left both these countries to the Western imperium.

The noteworthy event of this epoch is the chronological coincidence of the conversion of the Hungarians, Russians, and Poles to Christianity. But the personality that welds the whole mass together is still that of the young emperor.[b]

On a visit to Aachen, Otto caused the tomb of Charlemagne to be opened. That monarch was discovered seated on his throne. On Otto's return to Rome, he announced his intention of making her the capital of the modern, as she had been that of the ancient world, but the Romans were incapable either of comprehending his grand projects or of perceiving the advantage that must have accrued to them had their city once more become an imperial residence. The senseless and brutal populace again rose in open insurrection. On one occasion Otto, addressing them from a tower, upbraided them for their folly, and induced them to disperse. His death, which took place in 1002, was ascribed to poison, but was more probably caused by smallpox. In the following year, Pope Silvester also expired, and with him every hope that had been raised for the reformation of the church, which again fell under Italian influence.[d]

The remembrance of a young emperor with so wonderful a sense of phantasy, and with so sad a fate, could not easily disappear from out the world. Poetic tales grew up out of Otto's early grave and preserved his memory among the people longer than the sober accounts of history. It was related that Otto met his death through a betrayal of love; this glowing heart, so sensitive to friendship, could not be conceived of as untouched by the magic of love. Stephania, a beautiful but proud and heartless Roman lady, the widow of Crescentius—so runs the most widespread tradition—enchained the emperor by her charms and, when he had wholly given himself up to her, poisoned him, in order to avenge the death of her husband. There is a deep truth in this tale, but it was not a daughter of Rome but Rome herself who, with her imperishable charms, enchained, betrayed, and killed the youth who had been adorned with the imperial crown.[e]

### HENRY (II) THE SAINT (1002–1024 A.D.)

Otto dying childless, the succession to the throne was again disputed. Henry of Bavaria, the son of Henry the Wrangler, claimed it as the nearest of kin, and was supported by the clergy on account of his piety and his munificence towards the church. Henry's party was considerably strengthened by the adherence of Willigis, the pious archbishop of Mainz. Eckhart, his most dangerous opponent, lost his life before he could carry his projects into execution. Henry thereupon repaired to Aachen, where he was crowned. The markgraf Henry of Schweinfurt demanded immediately after the coronation of the emperor the dukedom of Bavaria, which had become vacant by Henry's accession to the throne and which was also aspired to by Bruno, the emperor's brother. Both competitors met with a refusal from Henry, who bestowed Bavaria upon his brother-in-law Henry, count of Luxemburg, upon which the two rivals entered upon a conspiracy against him with Boleslaw II of Bohemia, who had not inherited the peaceable disposition of his father. They were defeated by the emperor near Creussen (1003 A.D.) and pardoned.

Affairs also wore a different aspect in the East; Boleslaw Chrobry of Poland, a great conqueror, reduced Kieff in Russia beneath his rule. In Bohemia, Boleslaw had broken his oath of allegiance to the empire. The ancient race of Cracus had degenerated. A rival race, that of the Wrssowez, was at the head of the democratic and pagan party, but could merely offer a weak opposition, by dint of petty stratagems, to the more powerful Christian party. At length the assassination of one of the Wrssowez, by the

order of Boleslaw, occasioned the formation of a conspiracy against him; Boleslaw was enticed into Poland, where he fell into the hands of the enraged Wrssowez, who deprived him of sight, and placed Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia in the hands of Boleslaw of Poland. A great reaction ensued. Boleslaw, at the head of the united Poles and Bohemians, invaded the Lausitz and Meissen.

After several severe campaigns, the emperor at length succeeded in separating Bohemia from Poland, and in placing Udalrich or Ulrich, the brother of the blind Boleslaw, on the throne of that dukedom. Udalrich was faithless and tyrannical. In order the more firmly to secure the possession of the crown, he deprived his second brother, Jaromir, of sight. Boleslaw of Poland attempted to win him over, and sent his son, Mieczyslaw, to negotiate with him. Udalrich delivered him up to the emperor, who instantly restored him to liberty. The war, nevertheless, was still carried on. The emperor suffered a defeat (1015 A.D.), probably on the Bober, the half of his army that had crossed the stream being suddenly attacked by the enemy. Mieczyslaw, inspirited by this success, attacked Meissen; the castle was set on fire, but the conflagration was extinguished by the women, who poured mead on the spreading flames. The emperor afterwards undertook a fresh expedition into Silesia, where he laid siege to the city of Nimptsch, but without success. Peace was finally concluded with Poland at Bautzen (1018 A.D.).[d]

During the first years of the Polish war, the seizure of Valenciennes by Baldwin IV, count of Flanders, also called the arms of Henry into Lorraine; nor could the German plume himself on the success of his expedition in that quarter. Baldwin, indeed, was reduced to nominal submission; but he obtained from Henry not only the county of Valenciennes, but also the island of Walcheren, and a considerable portion of Zealand.[g]

### HENRY'S POLICY

Henry did not pursue the irrealisable imperial policy of the Ottos. Although he went down to Italy several times and was crowned king at Pavia (1005 A.D.) and emperor at Rome (1013 A.D.), his interests were plainly German, and the Italian affairs were no longer uppermost. Germany and not Rome was his home, and in these narrower limits, his policy, a national rather than imperial one, was successful. Raised to the throne without the advantage of direct descent from the great Otto, he tried a new device for subjecting the magnates of the realm, to whose favour he owed the crown. By the help of Councils of the church and Assemblies or Diets he attempted to keep his realm in hand. Though he was a good friend of the clergy he was not their tool as has been often charged. He used them as Otto I had done, to be the instruments of his temporal rule, and by his encouragement of the monastic reforms of Cheny, he as well as the people reaped many benefits.

The assemblies that met at his call to discuss the business of state are now looked back to as the first Reichstags, and his reign is in a sense the starting-point for something approaching a constitutional organisation of Germany.[a]

Henry was, in 1016, enriched by the donation of another kingdom. Rudolf III, king of Burgundy, having no children, resolved to secure his dominions to the emperor, his nephew; and in spite of the remonstrances of his subjects, who claimed the right of electing their sovereign, surrendered

his crown to Henry, reserving to himself for his life the title of king, but submitting to hold that title as a vassal of the empire. Rudolf survived this session sixteen years, and died in 1032, having by his will ratified the donation to the reigning emperor.[g]

Henry was extremely devout, and was consequently idolised by the clergy. He held five councils in Germany, improved and corrected ecclesiastical discipline, rebuilt the churches that had been destroyed by the Slavs, and raised a magnificent monument to his own memory by the foundation of the bishopric of Bamberg, which he enriched at the expense of the neighbouring landowners, among whom was the bishop of Würzburg, who obstinately resisted his innovations until appeased by numerous gifts. The pope, Benedict VIII, visited Bamberg in 1020 A.D. for the purpose of consecrating the new establishment. The empress Kunigunde was equally pious. The imperial pair had mutually taken the vow of chastity, and remained childless. Kunigunde's virtue, however, did not escape slander, and she voluntarily underwent the ordeal by fire, and "walked unharmed over glowing iron." Henry, when on his death-bed, named as his successor Graf Conrad, the Franconian duke, on account of his being the ablest descendant of the most powerful race that remained in Germany after the extinction of that of the Ottos, thus repaying, with equal magnanimity, the generous conduct of Conrad I, when dying, towards the house of Saxony. He expired in 1024 A.D. and was interred at Bamberg.[d]

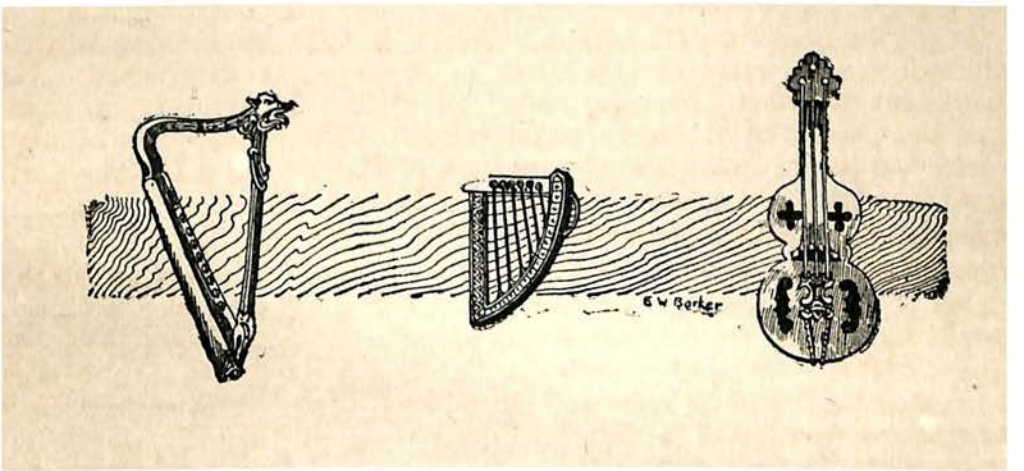
### RELATION OF ITALY TO THE EMPIRE AT DEATH OF HENRY II

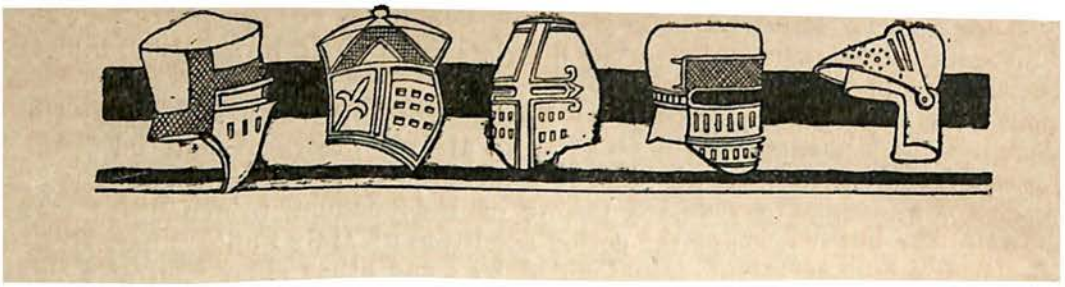
At the death of Otto III without children, in 1002, the compact between Italy and the emperors of the house of Saxony was determined. Her engagement of fidelity was certainly not applicable to every sovereign whom the princes of Germany might raise to their throne. Accordingly Ardoin, marquis of Ivrea, was elected king of Italy. But a German party existed among the Lombard princes and bishops, to which his insolent demeanour soon gave a pretext for inviting Henry II, the new king of Germany collaterally related to their late sovereign. Ardoin was deserted by most of the Italians, but retained his former subjects in Piedmont, and disputed the crown for many years with Henry, who passed very little time in Italy. During this period there was hardly any recognised government; and the Lombards became more and more accustomed, through necessity, to protect themselves and to provide for their own internal police.

Meanwhile the German nation had become odious to the Italians. The rude soldiery, insolent and addicted to intoxication, were engaged in frequent disputes with the citizens, wherein the latter, as is usual in similar cases, were exposed first to the summary vengeance of the troops and afterwards to penal chastisement for sedition. In one of these tumults, at the entry of Henry II in 1004, the city of Pavia was burned to the ground, which inspired its inhabitants with a constant animosity against that emperor. Upon his death in 1024, the Italians were disposed to break once more their connection with Germany, which had elected as sovereign Conrad, duke of Franconia. They offered their crown to Robert, king of France, and to Guillaume, duke of Guienne; but neither of them was imprudent enough to involve himself in the difficult and faithless politics of Italy. It may surprise us that no candidate appeared from among her native princes. But it had been the dexterous policy of the Ottos to weaken the great Italian

fiefs, which were still rather considered as hereditary governments, than as absolute patrimonies, by separating districts from their jurisdiction, under inferior marquises and rural counts.

The bishops were incapable of becoming competitors, and generally attached to the German party. The cities already possessed material influence, but were disunited by mutual jealousies. Since ancient prejudices, therefore, precluded a federate league of independent principalities and republics for which perhaps the actual condition of Italy unfitted her, Heribert, archbishop of Milan, accompanied by some other chief men of Lombardy, repaired to Constance, and tended the crown to Conrad, which he was already disposed to claim as a sort of dependency upon Germany. It does not appear that either Conrad or his successors were ever regularly elected to reign over Italy; but whether this ceremony took place or not, we may certainly date from that time the subjection of Italy to the Germanic body. It became an unquestionable maxim that the votes of a few German princes conferred a right to the sovereignty of a country which had never been conquered, and which had never formally recognised this superiority. But it was an equally fundamental rule that the elected king of Germany could not assume the title of Roman emperor, until his coronation by the pope. The middle appellation of King of the Romans was invented as a sort of approximation to the imperial dignity. But it was not till the reign of Maximilian that the actual coronation at Rome was dispensed with, and the title of emperor taken immediately after the election.[h]





## CHAPTER IX

## THE FRANCONIAN, OR SALIAN, DYNASTY

[1024–1125 A.D.]

FOR the epoch of Henry II we have preserved to us the work of Bishop Thietmar[b] of Merseburg, which, starting from local and personal points of view and showing the writer's unwavering loyalty to the king, to whom the bishop owed his position, at once discloses and elucidates in a variety of communications the conditions obtaining in the interior of Germany. Although not unbiassed where the king is concerned, it is yet invaluable in respect of the details it affords; the internal conditions of the empire are clearly mapped out before our eyes. On the other hand, the tendencies which characterise the imperium of Henry II are more or less obscured from view. The bishop, who must be regarded as a contemporary chronicler, was already dead when they had taken definite shape.

On the other hand, Wipo,[c] the biographer of Conrad II with whom the line of the Salians commences, started entirely from the standpoint of the imperium. He wrote a biography of Conrad after his death for the instruction and edification of his son and successor, Henry III. The aspirations of the Salic house in the direction of world-wide power occupy the chief place in his work. The devolvement of the imperium upon the Salic house was an event of great importance both in German and universal history. Yet there is nothing so very unexpected and extraordinary in the elevation of Conrad II.

The Salians represent one of the parties that had once, under Otto the Great, risen up against him from the very lap of his own family. They are descended, as we have already mentioned, from the marriage of one of Otto's daughters with the heroic Conrad the Red, the greatest warrior of those times. His son Otto, count in Wormsgau, received Carinthia, an appanage of Bavaria, in fief. He is the father of Bruno, whom Otto III raised to the papal see, as also of Conrad, who on his father's death succeeded to the dukedom of Carinthia. This Conrad was married to Matilde, a daughter of Hermann of Swabia. Of their union a son was born, known under the name of Conrad the Younger.

[1024 A.D.]

Duke Conrad, father of the younger Conrad, had had an elder brother named Henry, who possessed a count's fief in Franconia. This Henry — who was therefore to be considered the chief representative of the authority of that house, and who, had he not died before his father, would have inherited the dukedom — had married Adelheid, a sister of the powerful Alsatian count of the house of Egisheim. The issue of this marriage was Conrad II, to whom accordingly descended by right of inheritance the claims of the Conrad dynasty. The right of succession of the elder Conrad can hardly be questioned. For the prerogative of elder lines must be upheld, if we will do justice to the constant change of families upon the throne.[d]

After the decease of Henry II, it was evident to every friend of Germany that the unity of the nation must be cemented without delay if all that had been founded by Conrad I and Henry I was not to come wholly to naught. The princes and the higher ranks of nobles would perhaps have been well content to see the empire break up into its old condition of disintegration; the clergy, on the other hand, had nothing to gain by such a turn of fortune, and they consequently laboured with the utmost zeal for the appointment of a capable head to the empire. As matters stood the king could only be nominated by election, and on this occasion the election had to be held with more freedom and more solemnity than usual, because the choice was not limited to the children or descendants of a deceased monarch. In the early days of the vacancy no candidates for the highest office of the state presented themselves, and the question on whom to bestow the crown was therefore long debated amongst the princes, higher nobility, and bishops.

They finally resolved to call a solemn assembly of the people, and there to let the public opinion of the nation decide upon Henry's successor. It is possible that the persons who were secretly managing this business of the election had already a definite plan as to who was to be king; but such a plan might nevertheless present difficulties in the accomplishment, and for this reason each party tried to use the expedient of a national assembly for the furtherance of its own particular object. But to all appearance the public opinion of the nation occupied the position of arbitrator between the various parties, and as such exercised a stronger influence upon the election than might have been expected in view of the condition of the empire at the time.

Of course, except for the bishops and clergy this national assembly was entirely composed of the greater and lesser nobles and their followers, for the towns had not yet arrived at such a height of prosperity as to claim direct participation in the affairs of the empire. And, equally of course, the subordinate bondman had no opinion to give, only the gentry being qualified to vote. Hence the lesser nobility as a body represented the public opinion of the nation, in contradistinction to the sovereign princes; and it was they who were permitted to wield so great an influence in state affairs in the matter of the solemn election to the throne after the death of Henry II.

### A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Henry's death had taken place on the 13th of July, 1024, and on the 4th of September in the same year those qualified to vote amongst all the German races gathered together on the Rhine, beween Mainz and Worms, in the neighbourhood of the old "Königstuhl" (a stone structure in the form of a chair, where the kings of Germany were proclaimed), to proceed with

all solemnity to the election of a new head of the empire. The throng was considerable, and was distributed in accordance with the great duchies of the empire; the Lorrainers taking up their quarters on the left bank of the Rhine, the Saxons, Franconians, Swabians, and Bavarians on the right. The princes and bishops naturally took the lead in the election ceremonies, and they therefore met at Kamba, opposite Oppenheim. There they conferred concerning the candidates for royalty who should be proposed to the people — that is to say, to the aforesaid body of the minor nobility. The opinions they expressed always came to the knowledge of the popular assembly, so that the latter could exercise at least a moral influence upon the principal electors by applause or dissent. The conference lasted long, its fluctuations of opinion communicated a certain amount of agitation to the great throng, the minds of men were kept in suspense, and the solemn election became a scene of great animation. At length the diversities of opinion resolved themselves into an agreement that two men were worthiest to wear the crown, both of them Franconian nobles, both bearing the name of Conrad, and both being the sons of two brothers — grandsons of the famous Conrad the Red, son-in-law of Otto I. In order to distinguish between the two, one was styled the Elder and the other the Younger.

The election hung undecided between them for some time longer, till the elder Conrad, calculating the effect such a step would have upon the people, approached the younger with an amicable proposal that each of them should do his best to prevent a quarrel over the election; and to that end they should both undertake to yield sincere allegiance to whichever should be nominated by a majority of the princes with the assent of the people. When the younger Conrad had agreed to this, the archbishop of Mainz solemnly proposed the elder Conrad as head of the empire, setting forth his superior claims in a brief oration. The proposition was strongly supported by a majority of the bishops, and secured the assent of many of the princes; and when the empress Kunigunde, the widow of Henry II, handed over the insignia of royalty with all speed to Conrad the Elder, the assembly hailed him king of the Germans, and the election was ratified by the solemn plaudits of the nation. Conrad the Younger himself had given his vote for his cousin when he saw the way the election was tending, and a quarrel was thus avoided. The duke of Lorraine and the archbishop of Cologne both expressed their dissatisfaction at the result of the election, but no more serious consequences ensued; and Conrad the Elder was recognised by all parties as king of the Germans, the second of that name. This circumstance conduced greatly to the furtherance of the national interests of Germany, as did the result of the election itself; for the new king was a man well fitted to impart fresh strength and consequence to the empire.

Conrad II, it is true, was not animated by the noble spirit which leads through pure patriotism to a self-denying devotion to public affairs; on the contrary, he zealously pursued his own selfish ends, and was often led astray by motives of mere self-interest. Nevertheless, as it happened, his wishes coincided with the interests of the nation; for he strove to enhance the power of his own house, and seeking to attain this end by establishing a hereditary monarchy, he bent all his endeavours to increasing the imperial authority and, as a natural consequence, cementing national unity. Nor was he deficient in the qualities required for at least approximate success in his schemes, though we miss in him the nobler endowments for success, which advance openly to gain the object they have in view, by the help of genius, force of character, and inflexible will. But in place of these qualities he

[1024 A.D.]

possessed a political sagacity so keen and subtle that he could carry through the most difficult schemes by covert measures. With this sagacity he combined energy, courage, and skill in arms. Indeed for the greater part of his life he had been engaged in military pursuits, but he nevertheless was possessed of so remarkable an aptitude for politics, that, being as clear-headed as he was adroit, he directed the affairs of the state with altogether exceptional skill.

### CONRAD II INCREASES HIS POWER

In the year 1024 a gifted and vigorous king had at length been elected; to such a man a thorough reform of political conditions would certainly appear an imperative necessity in view of the condition to which the empire had been reduced. Conrad II had first to try to increase the property of the crown before he could venture upon a struggle against the usurpations of the nobles. This was not to be effected either easily or speedily, and he therefore endeavoured in the first place to gain time for confirming his power by friendly behaviour towards the great nobles. For this reason, after his consort Gisela had also been crowned at Cologne, he determined to begin by making a progress through Germany, for the double purpose of securing general recognition and investigating the condition of the crown lands of the head of the empire. He first went to Aachen, where an assembly of the nobles of Lorraine had been convened. The king's most formidable enemies were the seigneurs of the higher nobility; and in order to counterbalance them Conrad was obliged to rely on the middle classes, represented at this time by the lesser nobles, the commons not having yet attained a sufficient degree of power.

GERMAN WOMAN OF QUALITY OF THE TENTH CENTURY

During his stay in Aachen, the king won the favour of the lesser nobility by a very well calculated political measure. Most families of this class had already fallen, by the spread of feudalism, into the position of vassals to some great noble; and disputes frequently arose between them and their feudal lords, because in certain cases the latter would not allow the fief to be transmitted to the descendants of the vassal. Conrad II, who was well aware of this state of things and eager for any means of weakening the power of the great nobles, promulgated during his stay in Aachen a decree to the effect that the descendants of a vassal were entitled to succeed to the fief in perpetuity.

This was a very drastic measure, and greatly increased the popularity of the king. From Aachen Conrad proceeded to Saxony to dispose the minds of the Saxons favourably to himself. There he was obliged to have recourse to very different means. The Saxons were by this time accustomed to the unity of the German state, but they were still apprehensive of restrictions

upon their national laws, and their first and most pressing demand was for the confirmation of the same. These consisted of the harsh regulations of serfdom which had come down from primitive times, the strict prohibition of unequal marriages, etc., and thus redounded to the advantage of the nobility alone.

Conrad, however, could not afford to anger the great Saxon nobles, and he therefore confirmed "the so cruel laws of the Saxons," as Wipo[c] phrases it. Having thus secured his recognition by the North Germans, he next collected the tribute due from the border Slavs who were subjects of the empire, that by this means he might provide himself with material resources for carrying out his designs; and then proceeded by way of Franconia to Bavaria and Swabia. On this progress Conrad established himself firmly in the popular esteem, and by the time it was finished his position seemed much stronger than before.

In Italy fresh troubles had arisen, for a party among the Lombards were desirous of overthrowing the German supremacy, and wished to transfer their allegiance to France for that purpose. On the other hand, Heribert, archbishop of Milan, was well disposed towards the Germans, and therefore journeyed to visit Conrad II, who was at that time in Constance, in which place he had likewise resided during the first year of his reign. The king received him very graciously, and lent a favourable ear to the bishop's request that he should make a military expedition into Italy. An embassy from the opposition party, and from the city of Pavia in particular, had also made its appearance at Constance, but was harshly received by Conrad; and it is probable that he would at that time have undertaken a campaign beyond the Alps if he had not been busy with matters nearer home. The consummation of the national unity of the German race was obviously an admirable means of enhancing the power of the crown, but a considerable portion of German territory was still alienated from the empire. Part of Switzerland on the German side of the Jura belonged to Burgundy, which was ruled by an independent king.

A quarrel over the succession, to which we have previously referred, had already taken place between this monarch and Henry II, and had resulted in the conclusion of a treaty by which after the death of the childless king Rudolf the succession to his dominions was assured to the head of the German Empire.

When Henry was dead, however, the king of Burgundy tried to put a different construction on the treaty, declaring that he had bestowed the succession on Conrad's predecessor merely as his sister's son, and not as king of the Germans. But Conrad II being bent, as Wipo[c] observes, on the aggrandisement and not the diminution of the empire, forthwith took up arms against Rudolf and occupied the city of Bâle, which at that time belonged to Burgundy.

By this he incurred the violent enmity of Duke Ernst of Swabia, who was the "natural" heir of Rudolf, and of Gisela by her first marriage, and thus stepson to Conrad II; and as many German nobles secretly sided with the duke, while at the same time a Slavonic prince, Boleslaw by name, rebelled against the empire, and while the affairs of Italy seemed imperatively to demand the king's presence, the latter postponed the acquisition of the rest of Burgundy to a more favourable opportunity. He first marched to Saxony to reduce Boleslaw to submission; but the Slavonic prince died before his arrival, and a civil war broke out between his sons which exhausted the forces of both.

[1026-1030 A.D.]

## CONRAD IN ITALY AND GERMANY (1026-1039 A.D.)

Putting off, therefore, the subjugation of the rebellious Slavs, Conrad immediately set everything in readiness for his expedition into Italy. He first convoked a diet at Augsburg, had his son Henry elected successor to his throne, and yielding to his wife's persuasions was reconciled to his stepson, Duke Ernst of Swabia. This took place in 1026, and in the same year the German army made its appearance in Italy. Pavia was first invested, and repeated attempts were made to take it by storm; but the brave citizens victoriously repulsed every assault, and Conrad was reduced to great straits. This so enraged him that, goaded to fury, he savagely devastated the surrounding country. The German king gained little by these cruelties, and as in spite of his victory he suffered great loss at the taking of Ravenna, he might have been compelled to retreat ingloriously from Italy if his political astuteness had not come to his aid. He succeeded in bringing the king of Burgundy, on whose assistance the Lombards relied, over to his own side. Rudolf came to Italy in person to be present at Conrad's coronation as emperor, and the courage of the inhabitants of the invaded country sank so low that even Pavia surrendered, and Conrad was acknowledged king of Lombardy. He then received the imperial crown at the hands of Pope John XIX, on the 26th of March, 1027; and after making some provisions for the pacification of Lombardy he hastened back to Germany, where in the meanwhile his presence had become extremely necessary.

In spite of the show of reconciliation, Duke Ernst of Swabia was meditating open rebellion. Conrad was well informed of the plans of the conspirators, though the secret had been carefully guarded; and therefore, after crossing the Alps, he proceeded with all haste to Ratisbon to make preparations for subduing the threatened revolt. Conrad's plans on this occasion strikingly display his practical ability and clear-sightedness. During his absence in Italy the ducal office had become vacant in Bavaria by the death of Henry, and the king endeavoured to procure it for his own family. In view of the encroachments of the great nobles, who amassed vast wealth at the expense of the empire, this would have profited him little unless he could increase the ducal revenue at the same time. Consequently, having succeeded in getting his ten-year-old son Henry appointed duke of Bavaria, Conrad instituted a strict inquiry into the condition of the property of the empire in that province, and restored to the crown much that had been usurped by bishops and counts. By this measure the king really struck at the root of the evil. Decrees could do little to cement the unity of the empire; what it needed was to be provided with a material basis. And of this, the most necessary element in the condition to which the empire had come was the creation of a revenue which should make the head of the state independent of the accidents of private fortune for the maintenance of his authority.

The kings commonly made the mistake of trying to gain the adherence or friendship of the great nobles by presents made at the expense of the property of the empire; and therefore Conrad II acted not only wisely but honourably when, amidst the greatest dangers, he adopted the opposite course; for it was nobler to perish than to reduce the office of head of the state to a shadow, by purchasing the favour of the great nobles. The salutary effect of his firmness was quickly manifest; for after he had gained his object in Bavaria the king took vigorous measures to put an end to the agitation in Swabia. For this purpose he promptly convened a diet at Ulm to sit in judgment upon Duke Ernst in Alamannia. The duke collected an army

and marched against the king, but the firm attitude of the latter had already made a great impression upon the nobles. Two counts deserted the duke, others of the conspirators followed, and within a short time Ernst's forces were so diminished that he was obliged to submit to the king's mercy. Conrad had his stepson conveyed in custody to the fortress of Giebichenstein near Halle, and then reduced the whole of Swabia to allegiance to the head of the empire. These proceedings added greatly to his reputation, open and secret foes now courted the king's favour, and by the fifth year of his reign Conrad II had materially increased the authority of the empire.

He now determined to take in hand the expedition against the Slavs, which had been postponed on account of the urgency of Italian affairs; but it proved abortive, and he was forced to return into Saxony with great loss. A quarrel with the Hungarians arose at the same time, and Duke Ernst renewed his attempt at rebellion. Conrad had recalled him from Giebichenstein and offered to reinstate him in his duchy under certain conditions; but the negotiations came to nothing, Ernst escaped from his stepfather's court and with his faithful adherent, Count von Kyburg, essayed the fortune of war. Both were outlawed, and soon afterwards slain in a fight in the Black Forest.[1]

A GERMAN WARRIOR

Conrad's safety was consequently assured in that quarter, and he immediately invaded Hungary with an army. Here again he soon found it preferable to restore peace by the methods of political sagacity rather than by force of arms, and negotiations were therefore adroitly set on foot and brought to a successful issue. Stephen, king of Hungary, sued for peace and it was concluded on terms honourable to Germany. During the duke of Swabia's second revolt the Slavs, against whom Conrad's arms had proved so unfortunate, had invaded and ravaged Saxony and Thuringia.

Little could be done to oppose them, on account of the war with the Hungarians, but as soon as that was ended the German king resolved to exact satisfaction. Once more, however, he was desirous of courting success by policy rather than by arms. Mieczyslaw, the son of Duke Boleslaw, was involved in a war (as has already been stated) with his brother Otto. Now, in Conrad's unlucky campaign against Mieczyslaw, Otto, who inclined to the side of the Germans, had been driven out of the country. With him

[1 As C. T. Lewis notes: "The people took sides in their legends and songs with the unfortunate youth who had fought for his inheritance against a severe stepfather, and compared his fate with that of the equally unfortunate Ludolf, son of Otto the Great. Indeed, legend merged the two stories into one, and thus arose the song of Ernst of Swabia, which was long sung in the Middle Ages and represents the two friends as finally going to the East upon a crusade and meeting with manifold adventures."]

[1032-1036 A.D.]

Conrad again entered into negotiations, and in consequence Otto (who was also favoured by the Russians) appeared once more in the district between the Elbe and the Oder, occupied by Slavonic tribes, who even then were styled Poles. Conrad sent an army from Saxony to support his protégé, and the civil war began afresh among the Poles. Mieczyslaw was thus brought to a more yielding temper, and, although Otto was slain soon after, he endeavoured to establish a permanent peace with the king of Germany. A peace was actually brought about, the Polish prince submitting to tribute and to give part of the country between the Elbe and the Oder to the Germans.

During the war and the negotiations with Mieczyslaw (in the year 1032) King Rudolf of Burgundy died. Conrad II had long laid claim to the succession, and as a certain count of Champagne, Eudes by name, opposed his pretensions, he was obliged to turn his arms westwards after concluding peace with the Poles. The count of Champagne had already occupied Neuenburg (Neuchâtel) and Murten (Morat); but by the winter of 1032 he had been forced into a somewhat disadvantageous position in Switzerland, and when, in the year 1033, Conrad II invaded Champagne itself to compel his rival to evacuate Burgundy, the latter submitted at discretion and promised the king of the Germans that he would leave the country, confirming his promise with a solemn oath. Conrad was obliged to hurry back to Germany, as another Slavonic tribe on the Elbe, the Liutizi this time, was disquieting Germany, and Othelric, duke of Bohemia, was threatening rebellion. Othelric was deposed, and Conrad was on the point of attacking the Liutizi when tidings came that Eudes of Champagne had broken his word and was again endeavouring to acquire the sovereignty of Burgundy. In the spring of 1034 the German king marched for the second time through Bavaria and Swabia to Burgundy, while another army invaded it at his command, crossing over the St. Bernard from Lombardy. From this time forward Eudes could offer but a futile resistance. Conrad was acknowledged king by the whole of Burgundy, and the country was solemnly incorporated with the German Empire. Switzerland was thereby also brought into complete union with the mother-country, and the full extent of German nationality restored. Thereupon Conrad brought the Liutizi once more into subjection to the empire, but in this war such cruelties were perpetrated that he entailed upon himself the curses of the unhappy Slavs and the reprobation of history.

Nevertheless his outward position was brilliant. Not only had he considerably extended the borders of the empire, but he had exalted the royal office to power and dignity. Tranquillity prevailed in the interior of Germany; in Italy, on the contrary, a commotion arose more serious than the disorders common in that country. There, as in Germany, the sway of the great nobles was oppressive, but in Italy disaffection was rife among the vassals, and they determined to resist the arrogant pretensions of their lords, sword in hand. The storm broke out first in Milan, and between that city and Lodi a great battle was fought which practically left matters as they had been. The emperor allowed himself to be drawn into the quarrel, and undertook a second military expedition to Italy in the year 1036.

In Italy the emperor promulgated a famous edict on the subject of estates in fee (*Edictum de beneficiis*), by which he directed that a vassal should not be deprived of such an estate except for certain offences, and then only by the sentence of the law pronounced by a court of his peers.

The appeal to the king or his deputy had a place in these legal proceedings — another clear proof of the purpose of Conrad's policy, which aimed at weakening the power of the great nobles.

On the other hand there are many evidences to show how greatly the royal authority had increased. For one thing, Conrad deposed Duke Adalbert of Carinthia from his high office in 1035, because he had not borne himself worthily in the Lombard disturbances; and Italy itself witnessed a deed wholly without precedent, for Archbishop Heribert of Milan, a powerful prince and highly respected dignitary of the church, who occupied almost the first place after the pope, was arrested for disloyalty by the German king.

Heribert saved himself from imprisonment by flight, and Conrad, whom he then openly defied, could hardly take any effective action against him; nevertheless the occurrence produced a profound impression. After two years' absence from home the king returned to Germany, where he occupied himself principally with the affairs of Burgundy, and ultimately delegated the government of that country to his son Henry. In the year 1038 he proceeded to North Germany and there endeavoured to consolidate the empire by paving the way for settled legal order. In the year 1039 he fell sick at Utrecht, and died at that place on the 3rd of July in the same year.

## THE ACCESSION OF HENRY III (1039 A.D.)

Among the merits of Conrad II, a high place must be given to the care he bestowed upon the education of his son and successor. Henry III was adorned with all the qualities which constitute the basis of true greatness; for not only did his admirable intellectual endowments render him capable of acquiring skill as a statesman and a commander, but his firmness and courage provided him with means of applying what he learned to practical affairs. With acute intelligence and energy he combined a high degree of moral earnestness, manifested in honourable endeavours after improvement; and as the natural bias of his mind inclined him strongly to benevolence and justice, nothing but a wise education was needed to make Henry one of the noblest of his race.[1]

Fortunately the development of his character was well cared for. His mother, Gisela, a woman of strong intellect and great nobility of soul, highly educated for her time, had a beneficent influence on him in childhood, and when the boy had thriven and grown strong under her care he was transferred altogether to the charge of the learned bishop Bruno of Augsburg, who initiated his pupil, by years of systematic teaching, into all the knowledge of the age. Then followed instruction in political affairs from Bishop Eigelbert of Freisingen, by which Henry profited so greatly that from his nineteenth year onwards his father was able to employ him in such matters. At the same time, he was thoroughly trained in all knightly accomplishments, and early sent into the field.

The twenty-two-year-old king saw clearly the path he had to follow. Even in his father's life-time he had realised where the strength and the weakness of the empire lay; where he should continue to act in his father's spirit, and where he must strike out on a totally different path. Henry III, like his predecessor, desired the aggrandisement of his own house; like him he endeavoured to make the royal dignity hereditary in his family, but he scorned to stoop to unworthy means. Being convinced that his endeavours were conducive to the interests of the nation rather than subversive of them,

[1 Bryce] says: "Under Henry III the empire attained the meridian of its power. At home Otto the Great's prerogative had not stood so high."]

he felt his conscience clear and thought himself justified in carrying out his designs by honourable methods. He was thus constrained to avoid much in which Conrad II would have indulged himself, and the first token of this difference was Henry's firm resolve to raise the standard of public morals by steadfastly refusing to accept gifts in return for ecclesiastical preferment.

### HENRY'S EFFORTS FOR PEACE

Even during the life-time of Conrad II, Bretislaw, duke of Bohemia, a son of Othelric, had invaded Poland and perpetrated hideous ravages in the country. The German king — either appealed to by the inhabitants in their distress, or apprehensive for his own sake of the spread of the power of Bohemia — despatched two armies in the year 1039 to attack Bretislaw in Bohemia itself, an enterprise which ended in disaster to the Germans. In order to restore his impaired credit, Henry was obliged to undertake a fresh expedition against the Bohemian duke in the following year. This he conducted with great energy, himself leading one of the two armies he had equipped. This time victory waited upon the German arms, Prague was invested and Bretislaw compelled to submit. The latter vowed allegiance and fealty to the head of the German Empire, undertook to pay tribute, and gave hostages as a guarantee of his good faith. For all that Henry was not yet free to devote his energies to the domestic affairs of the empire, for disturbances began to be rife in Burgundy and fresh dangers loomed in the Hungarian quarter. Peter, king of Hungary, had been driven out of his country, and appealed for assistance to Henry at Ratisbon ; Ovo, the new king, pursued him with an army and the enemies plundered freely in Bavaria.

In consequence Henry marched to Hungary with an army in August, 1042, to demand satisfaction for the outrage. He advanced victoriously through the country, took several fortified towns, and received the oath of allegiance or fealty from the inhabitants ; but he could not induce them to take back their banished king. He therefore installed another sovereign and returned at once to Germany. In the winter immediately following (1042) he hurried to Burgundy, where he tranquillised the country by his firm and clement administration of justice. Thus he quickly reduced the refractory nobles to obedience ; but on the other hand fresh troubles arose in Hungary, where the people drove out the new sovereign whom Henry had installed as soon as the latter had withdrawn from the country. Ovo made repeated incursions into Bavaria and laid waste the country on both sides of the Danube. The German king, who was consequently constrained to undertake a second campaign against the Hungarians, soon put an end to the evil, and compelled the enemy not only to make reparation but to give ampler security for his good behaviour in future.

Then at length Henry resolved to devote all his attention to internal politics. One of the greatest evils of the times was the abuse of the right of self-help, which gave birth to a rude system of government by force under which the nation was lapsing into savagery. The weaker suffered under the heaviest oppressions, and the wise king was therefore deeply concerned to remedy first of all this aspect of public affairs. To pave the way for the establishment of a system of law he convened a diet of the empire at Constance, when he returned from his second Hungarian campaign. This took place in the year 1043, and many temporal lords, as well as bishops, appeared

at it. Henry III was always present at its deliberations; he fired all who were there by his own enthusiasm for peace and justice, and brought them to a unanimous decision that thenceforth legal order should be maintained in Germany. The king issued a decree to this effect with the sanction of the diet, and thus established a peace hitherto unknown in the country. To ensure a result so happy Henry had set a noble example by magnanimously pardoning all his enemies.

From Constance, Henry proceeded to Goslar, where in the winter of 1043 he was visited by embassies from several nations desirous of testifying their respect for the head of the German Empire. So great was the esteem in which he was held that a Russian embassy solemnly offered the young king, who was already a widower, the hand of the czar's daughter. Henry, however, haughtily rejected any such alliance, and the Russians departed sorrowfully from his court. In the same year the king married Agnes, daughter of the count of Poitiers, and at this ceremony one of the admirable traits of his character was clearly shown. Great distress prevailed in the land in consequence of the failure of the crops and an outbreak of cattle-plague; and instead of admitting jugglers and musicians to his nuptial festivities and bestowing rich presents upon them, he distributed the money among the poor, to alleviate their distress. Other events soon occurred to augment the troubles of the time, for the Hungarians a third time broke their oath of allegiance, while symptoms of rebellion declared themselves in Lorraine, Duke Gottfried trying to seize for his own the portion of the country which his father, with the king's consent, had assigned to Gozelo, his second son. Under these circumstances Henry had only a small force to employ against the Hungarians, but once more his daring and courage compensated for the paucity of material resources.

Ovo offered battle at the head of an immense army. The German king had not yet collected all his troops, many of them having been delayed by the way. Nevertheless Henry boldly crossed the Raab under the eyes of the Hungarians, made a furious onslaught on the enemy's lines with his handful of troops, and won a victory as complete as it was brilliant. As a result of this success Peter was reinstated as king and received the crown of Hungary as a fief of the German Empire. After these great achievements Henry swiftly turned his arms against the rebel duke Gottfried of Lorraine. The struggle did not long hang in the balance; Gottfried soon realised the king's superior power, submitted, and was punished with incarceration in the fortress of Giebichenstein. Thus by a solemn act of justice the emperor of the Germans ratified the political principle that the dukes were responsible officers of the state. To confirm by practice the royal prerogative of nominating such officers, the dukedom of Swabia was conferred on Count Otto of the Rhenish palatinate in the year 1045; and in 1046 Frederick, brother of the duke of Bavaria, was installed in Upper Lorraine, in place of Gozelo. In the same spirit Henry guarded against usurpations on the part of other great nobles. Thus, in the year 1046, he punished Margrave Dietrich of Vlärdingen in Holland, for having taken wrongful possession of what was not his own.

### THE PAPACY SUBORDINATED TO HENRY

The affairs of Italy next attracted the attention of the German king. There the utmost disorder had crept, not only into political affairs, but also into those of the church. Ecclesiastical preferment was openly bought and

[1046-1047 A.D.]

sold, church dignitaries strove among themselves for power by intrigues of every sort, while, to crown all, three popes were quarrelling for the authority of supreme pontiff. Scenes of this kind confirmed Henry in his determination to inaugurate a reformation of the church. He therefore made preparations to proceed to Italy forthwith, but before starting he released Duke Gottfried from his captivity at Giebichenstein, and magnanimously reinstated him in his high office. He then crossed the Alps with a vast army in the autumn of 1046. On his arrival in Italy he found a council of bishops who had assembled at his command at Sutri to decide first of all the scandalous dispute between pope and rival popes. The king of Germany refused to tolerate any one of the antagonists, but required that they should all three be deposed. By the mingled energy and wisdom of his conduct he succeeded in carrying his point, and a German prelate, Bishop Suidger of Bamberg, was appointed head of the church at his wish. Suidger assumed the title of Clement II, and Henry received the imperial crown from his hand in St. Peter's church at Rome, in the year 1047. One important step had now been taken towards the accomplishment of the king's great designs, and having seen the new pope firmly established in his office, Henry III returned that same year to Germany.

There the beneficial results of the Diet of Constance were gratifyingly evident, for such order prevailed throughout the country "as no man ever experienced before." Margrave Dietrich of Vlärdingen had indeed attempted to avail himself of the king's absence to renew his arrogant pretensions, and Duke Gottfried of Lorraine still nourished thoughts of sedition; the two had even formed a secret confederacy against the emperor, together with Count Baldwin of Flanders. But they had but short-lived successes; Henry III promptly deposed the rebellious duke from his office, and deprived him of all authority. Dietrich lost not only his dominions, but his life into the bargain, and the whole of his territory was brought under the emperor's sway. The credit of the imperial authority was completely restored.

GERMAN WARRIOR OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Meanwhile the king displayed the most commendable vigour in the conduct of domestic politics. During the disturbances in Lorraine and Holland, which he left to his great officers to quell, he had been making progress through all parts of Germany and had despatched important affairs of state at various places. Everywhere the king's keen glance watched over the course of justice, and the interior of Germany attained a notable degree of prosperity and contentment. This we can perceive from the fact that the cities were rising by degrees to the position of an independent element in the state. In the wars against Gottfried of Lorraine and Dietrich of Vlärdingen, the citizens, admonished by the bishops, often took up arms themselves in defence of their cities, which is evidence

not only of the advance which those communities had made both in wealth and population, but also of the political importance they had acquired. It is worthy of note, also, that even then the cities were on the side of imperial authority against rebellious counts and dukes.

Henry III was now strong enough to carry through the long-contemplated reformation of the church. In the press of business which had occupied him he had never lost sight of ecclesiastical affairs; on the contrary, he had steadily made preparations with a view to his purpose in this respect, displaying a vigour which commands admiration. The pope had previously claimed the right to nominate the emperor; the third Henry, on the contrary, exercised a decisive influence over the election of the pope, and it became almost customary that this office should be conferred by the king of Germany. The elevation of Clement II to the papacy had taken place by Henry's desire; Clement died nine months after, and the king of Germany nominated the bishop of Brixen as his successor. This pope, who took the name of Damasus II, died a few weeks after his arrival at Rome; and Henry again filled the vacancy in the apostolic see, this time elevating a relative of his own, Bishop Bruno of Toul, to the position of head of the church. The manner in which the chroniclers speak of these important proceedings is remarkable. With them there is no longer any question of the right of the king of Germany to nominate the pope; they mention it as a matter that calls for no explanation. "Poppo, bishop of Brixen," says Hermann,[f] "was chosen pope by the emperor and sent to Rome, where he was received with great honour." The same thing is said of the nomination of the bishop of Toul. Lambert of Aschaffenburg,[g] who confirms this testimony, adds that on the death of the pope the Romans always sent an embassy to the king of Germany to request him to nominate a new supreme pontiff. Such a state of things was wholly without precedent, and by means of it Henry exalted, more highly than any of his predecessors, the power of the empire.

In the completion of the reformation of the church in the year 1050, one of the emperor's chief aims was fulfilled. The effect of the measure on the country was most salutary, morals were purified and a higher standard of seriousness and industry prevailed. The system of law and order was consolidated by the subjugation of the great nobles. But it was not only the dukes and counts whom Henry kept within bounds; he inflicted sharp chastisement on members of the lesser nobility also, by confiscating their property or by other methods, if they committed any act of wanton injustice. By this means he imposed a strong restraint upon the abuse of self-help, and the towns throve and increased so rapidly that they presently began to take direct part in the affairs of the empire.

For several years Henry's relations with foreign countries were friendly; but this peace was disturbed from 1051 onwards by the joint attempt of the Poles and Hungarians to shake off German dominion. The Hungarians invaded the empire, and in the year 1051 the emperor took the field against them in person. He advanced into Hungary itself with a great force; and though obliged to withdraw by inclement weather, his retreat was marked by valiant feats of arms on the part of the German army. In the following year, 1052, a second expedition was undertaken against Hungary. Henry III invested Pressburg, but at the intercession of Pope Leo IX he raised the siege and returned to Germany. But a genuine peace could not be brought about merely by the mediation of the pontiff; the enmity continued.

The Peace of Tribur was finally ratified, and Henry had once more time to devote his energies to the internal affairs of the empire. Down to the year

1055 he worked hard at consolidating the legal system and developing the resources of the nation. Fresh disorders in Italy called him thither. Matters beyond the Alps had been in dire confusion for many years, for Pope Leo IX became involved in a war with the Normans in 1053 and was actually taken prisoner by them. In addition, Gottfried, the deposed duke of Lorraine, who had been reconciled to the emperor in 1050 by the good offices of Leo IX and had then accompanied the pope to Italy, had there married the widow of Marquis Bonifazio of Tuscany and taken possession of her former husband's dominions. Henry III feared that Gottfried would stir up rebellion in Italy, and this circumstance seemed also to render the emperor's presence in that country imperative. He had therefore long meditated another expedition across the Alps, but disaffections that arose in Germany itself and various isolated attempts on the part of some refractory nobles decided him not to quit the country.

In the year 1054 Pope Leo died and the Romans again sent an embassy to request the emperor to nominate a new pope. This he at first modestly declined to do; but, yielding nevertheless to their reiterated entreaties, he designated Bishop Gebhard of Eichstädt, his kinsman and friend, as the successor of Leo IX. Gebhard was unanimously accepted in this capacity, and assumed the papal dignity under the title of Victor II, amidst the acclaims of the people. Thus Henry III for the fourth time disposed of the papal office, and for the fourth time conferred it on a German. At the nomination of Victor II Hildebrand himself, the influential counsellor of Leo IX, was with the embassy which besought the emperor to designate the next pope, which proves how little intention Hildebrand had of opposing the will of Henry III. Like the emperor he earnestly desired reform, and showed by this step that he had no fear of undue encroachments on the part of the latter upon the privileges of the church. Thus even the strongest natures in a manner attest their reverence for the great emperor's character.

GERMAN NOBLE OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY IN COURT DRESS

After the appointment of Pope Victor II, the king of Germany felt himself bound to afford him the protection of his imperial authority, and in the year 1055 he started for Italy, almost at the same time as the pope. In May of that year he appeared on the plains of Roncaglia; and there the princes and feudal vassals of Italy likewise appeared, to offer the homage of sincere reverence to the king of Germany, together with their oaths of allegiance. Pope Victor II convened a synod at Florence, where, in the emperor's presence, the laws against simony and other edicts of a reformatory tendency were either re-enacted or amplified. An inquiry was then held into the conduct of Gottfried, sometime duke of Lorraine, which ended in the acquittal of the defendant — not, so the old chronicler expressly states, because his innocence was proved, but because his judges feared that if driven to desperation he would make himself the leader of the Normans in

lower Italy. His wife Beatrice was carried off to Germany by Henry III, who defended his arbitrary action in this respect by saying that Beatrice had disposed of her hand without his consent, and had moreover bestowed it upon an enemy of her country. Towards the end of the year 1055 the emperor recrossed the Alps. Several nobles were already cherishing schemes of revolt, for a conspiracy had been formed against him under the leadership of Bishop Gebhard of Ratisbon; and Gottfried, assisted by Count Baldwin, once more made his appearance in Lorraine. The schemes of the malcontents were again frustrated by Henry's firmness; Gebhard was brought to trial and committed to prison, and both Gottfried and Baldwin were defeated in the open field.

On this occasion the emperor met the king of France at Jovi to settle various affairs of state, and here again the vigour and heroic temper of Henry III were strikingly displayed. For the French king asserted that the German Empire had unlawfully taken possession of Lorraine, whereupon Henry offered to prove the falsity of the assertion by single combat. The king of France was only too well aware of the German emperor's superiority, and fled secretly by night across the border.[h]

## THE TRUCE OF GOD

The times were rude, manners were no less so. Ceaseless wars, the feuds of the nobles, acts of violence of every kind, combined with hunger and pestilence to bring unspeakable misery upon the nations. According to the opinions of the time, the papacy should have been a strong helper in the midst of these calamities, but Rome was the seat of the worst disorders of all and most of the popes neither deserved nor commanded respect. At length the miseries of the age aroused — first in the monastery of Cluny in Burgundian France — an austere and devout religious spirit which at first found expression, according to the fashion of the times, in penitential exercises and monkish discipline, but presently ripened into vast projects of reform.

Hence came, in particular, the recommendation of the "truce of God" (*Treuga Dei*), and hence it spread over Burgundy and France. This was an attempt to insure certain days of peace and quiet in that iron age; it ordained that no feud should be fought out between Wednesday evening and early Monday morning, and the church sanctioned this institution. So strong was the influence of the example set by Cluny (Clugny) that in a little while all the numerous monasteries in France and Burgundy joined the "congregation of Cluny," and a sombre earnestness took possession of the best men of the time.

So it was with Henry III. In the midst of the corruptions of the age he saw no salvation except through the most drastic measures, and felt that he, as the emperor, had a special call to be the deliverer of the people. He himself set a good example; he appointed none but earnest and worthy men to bishoprics, and that without taking money or presents from them; by act and admonition he laboured incessantly for peace and conciliation. He looked upon his imperial rank as a sacred office, instituted for the improvement of Christendom, and never set the crown upon his head without previous confession and penance, which last he even had inflicted upon himself with scourges. But the more he humbled himself the more urgent did he feel was the call to raise up the church by the mighty hand of the first of earthly sovereigns.

SORROWS OF HENRY'S LAST YEARS

The day of Sutri was the culminating point of the emperor's life; from that time forward until he died he was engaged in an incessant struggle with adverse circumstances. The Hungarians, after overthrowing King Peter and putting out his eyes, had shaken off the yoke of the empire, and Henry's frequent expeditions against the rebels led to no good result. Furthermore, before these events occurred, that same Gozelo of Lorraine to whom Conrad II had been so deeply indebted and upon whom he had bestowed the whole of Lorraine, had died, and Henry III conferred Upper Lorraine alone as a fief upon his son Gottfried the Bearded. Gottfried rebelled, and, as we have seen, won the hand of Beatrice of Tuscany, the widow of Bonifazio; and thus by marriage this enemy of the emperor had become the most powerful prince in Italy.

Momentous changes were also taking place in lower Italy. The Normans had there founded a dominion which began to menace the borders of the states of the church. Leo IX, like his predecessor a German by birth, went to war with them, and took the field in person after the custom of German bishops. He had been defeated and taken prisoner at the battle of Civitate, not far from Monte Gargano. But the Normans, as crafty as they were devout, treated the successor of St. Peter with profound veneration, and Leo made his peace with them, outwardly at least, and repealed the sentence of excommunication pronounced upon them. After Leo's death, Hildebrand, who directed the policy of the papal see, realised the value of the friendship thus gained; and seeing that the Normans were anxious to establish a legitimate claim to their conquests in lower Italy and Sicily, he induced them to accept their lands in fee from St. Peter, after which they became loyal vassals of the pope. This circumstance, together with the rise of Gottfried's power, obliged the emperor to undertake a fresh expedition to Rome. In the matter of the Normans, Henry could achieve nothing, for affairs in Germany had obliged him to return thither with all speed.

Disaffection was rife among the nobles throughout the empire, for Henry, like his father, had endeavoured to secure the dukedoms for his own family, or to confer them on men of no consequence who should be dependent upon himself. The Saxons, whose ancient pride could ill brook the rule of a Franconian, bore him the bitterest ill-will of all, and, of the Saxons, the ducal house of Billing most keenly resented the wrongs which, like many other great Saxon families, it believed it had suffered at the hands of the emperor and his friends. The expenses of the court, which the emperor usually held at Goslar to keep the Saxons in check, also weighed heavily upon the province. The nobility were in a ferment throughout the empire; the emperor held them down with iron hand, but his position was in truth even such as one of his faithful councillors and friends saw in a dream: "The emperor stood before his throne, sword in hand, and cried with a terrible countenance that he would yet smite down all his enemies." But he was snatched from the empire in the flower of his age, when its need of a strong ruler was sorest. The pope was on a visit to him, and his nobles were gathered about him in his palace at Bodfeld in the Harz, where he had gone for a few days to enjoy the pleasures of the chase. There he was met by the news of a defeat inflicted on Saxon levies by the Wend tribes at Prizlava, in the angle between the upper Havel and the Elbe. The evil tidings were soon followed by the death of the great monarch, and his empire was left to a child six years old, helpless in the face of the evil days to come.

## HENRY IV (1056-1106 A.D.)

The first two emperors of the house of Franconia had drawn in the reins of government so tightly that the German princes seemed to have fallen once more upon the times of Charles and Otto the Great. But the old intractability which prevented complete union was still active in the German races, and this instinct was now reinforced by the private interest of the great nobles who found the authority of the empire irksome when too vigorously wielded, and whose sovereign privileges had been greatly reduced under Conrad II and Henry III. The moment was therefore propitious to all who hated a strong and united empire, for a child king now succeeded the strongest and sternest ruler the empire had ever known. The empress Agnes was to undertake the regency for the youthful monarch, Henry IV, as Theophano had done for Otto III. She did so with Bishop Henry of Augsburg for her adviser. But envy, selfishness, and perfidy were already at work undermining the power of the crown. Under the first Franconian monarchs times and manners had been rude and hard, but now all restraint was flung aside and every consideration of right and fealty seemed to have departed from the empire.

Troubles presently began to ferment; here and there in Saxony a rumour ran of attempts on the young king's life. Agnes was soon forced to make large concessions in order to gain friends, who proved untrustworthy after all. A Saxon noble, Otto, of the family of Nordheim, a race akin to the Billings, whose hereditary seat lay close to the modern town of Göttingen, received from the empress the duchy of Bavaria, which Henry III had acquired for his own house. Rudolf von Rheinfelden, a Burgundian noble, worked his way into the empress' good graces, and received the duchy of Swabia together with the hand of the daughter of the empress. The duchy of Carinthia was given to Berthold, a Zähringian. If only the empress could have purchased fidelity by these concessions! But not one of these men was trustworthy; and the moving spirit of all the plots which aimed at wresting the sovereign power from the empress and bestowing it on the nobles of the empire, was Archbishop Hanno of Cologne, a man of low origin, but ambitious, harsh, crafty, and cunning, although outwardly wearing the semblance of the sanctity of the cloister. It was natural that the power of the empire should decline abroad — in Italy, in Hungary, and over the Wends; and the fact was laid to the charge of the empress, together with the accusation that she was bringing up her son too effeminately. In brief a criminal project was maturing in Hanno's heart as in the hearts of the princes, his allies. The empress was then at Kaiserwerth on the Rhine with her twelve-year-old son, when Hanno appeared at her court, and after a festive banquet invited the young king to take an excursion on the Rhine in his beautiful boat. The boy embarked unsuspectingly with Hanno, together with some of the conspirators: the bishop's serfs plied their oars and the boat was quickly under way. The lamentations of the young king's mother pursued him from her balcony; the people followed on the banks, cursing the robbers; and the boy himself, alarmed and fearing the worst, jumped into the river, from which he was rescued with difficulty. But the plot had succeeded and Hanno, who now had the young king in his own hands, succeeded, by the help of the nobles, in assuming the reins of power at the head of the bishops.

Matters were not thereby mended in the empire. The empress soon retired from the world and ended her days in Italy, occupied in works of piety. Under Hanno's administration any man who pleased laid hands on the royal

demesnes ; and a few years later the young king was an eye-witness of mortal combat in the cathedral at Goslar, where brawling ecclesiastics fought for temporal honours in the very sanctuary.

Such an education sowed the seeds of mistrust, bitterness, and hatred in the heart of the young ruler, and as soon as he was able he threw himself into the arms of a different guide, Archbishop Adalbert of Bremen. The latter, no less ambitious than Hanno, and even prouder, sought to exalt his famous metropolitan see, whence missions still went forth across the North Sea and the Baltic, to the position of the patriarchate of the north. Formerly the friend of Henry III, he now sought to win the friendship of the youthful Henry IV. When Henry attained the age of sixteen he declared him of age, according to German law, by girding him with the sword, but for some years he continued to direct his unripe youth. In his endeavours Adalbert frequently incurred the displeasure of the Saxon nobles. Their intentions, as a matter of fact, were evil, and it was against them that he fostered the young king's suspicions. Meanwhile the latter began to grow up to independent manhood. Of the authority, property, and prerogatives of his predecessors, he found but little left ; all his efforts were directed to their recovery, and in pursuit of this end he manifested the iron will of his forefathers. Their hot blood flowed also in his veins, inciting him to occasional arbitrary acts, and above all to excesses which were magnified by the slanderous tongues of his enemies. He first sought to subdue Saxony. The means he employed for the purpose were such as the Normans had adopted in lower Italy ; he erected strongholds in commanding situations in the land. From these centres, however, many acts of violence were perpetrated in the surrounding country, and he thus aroused the wrath, not only of individual nobles, but of the whole Saxon race.

But Henry did more than this to compass the fall of the enemies who had ruled for so long. About this time a man arose to accuse Otto of Nordenheim, duke of Bavaria, of having conspired against the king's life, and offered to prove the charge by ordeal. Henry deposed the duke, laid him under the ban of the empire, together with Magnus of Saxony, of the house of Billing, and presently threw the latter into the dungeon of the Harzburg. He seemed bent upon completely abolishing the duchy of Saxony ; but Bavaria he gave to a member of the ancient Swabian dynasty, Welf by name. Meanwhile Adalbert had died, after having seen all his plans go to wreck ; for the Wends east of the Elbe, among whom he had hoped to establish his suffragan bishoprics by the help of Godschalk, one of their own chiefs, had rebelled, and extirpated Christianity for the time and for long afterwards, within their borders.

Henry IV had begun his reign with vigour. This circumstance only hastened the formation of conspiracies against him among the nobles throughout the empire. In Saxony, the whole nation was in a ferment — clergy, nobles, and commons. All complained of intolerable oppression, exercised from Henry's strongholds. At the head of the league now formed stood Otto of Nordheim. In South Germany, Rudolf of Swabia was in accord with him ; Welf and Hanno were equally aware of the plot. The pope, too, influenced by Hildebrand, now cardinal subdeacon, also began to take an interest in German affairs ; he zealously opposed his ecclesiastical authority to the evil desires of King Henry, who wished for a divorce from Bertha, his noble wife ; and he also sought to intervene as mediator at the request of the Saxons.

Meanwhile the whole empire was on the verge of rebellion. In the year 1073 the Saxons rose as one man, and marched in a body sixty thousand

strong to Harzburg near Goslar, a castle on a lofty height, commanding a wide view of the surrounding country, which the king had made into a stately royal residence. Henry, after useless negotiations, barely escaped by flight. When he tried to gather the princes of the empire around him, none appeared; nay, the idea of deserting him altogether and electing another emperor was openly mooted. At this crisis the towns alone proved true to Henry from the outset; and whilst these negotiations were pending, he lay sick to death in the loyal city of Worms. But he had scarcely recovered before he met and defeated the foreign foe in Hungary; and then with restless activity he turned to affairs at home. He still had some friends; the archbishop of Mainz, the dukes of Lorraine and Bohemia, and Welf of Bavaria came over on his side; and finally even Rudolf, who shortly before had laid the most treasonable plots against him, thought it advisable to make a fresh display of devotion. Concord between the South German princes and Saxons was at an end, and Henry skilfully made use of their dissensions.

In the wantonness of victory the Saxons had destroyed the Harzburg; they had even burned a church and desecrated graves; the archbishop of Mainz excommunicated them for the sacrilege; and in the summer of 1075 Henry IV marched against them, with such a splendid array as few emperors before him had led, in spite of their proffers of atonement and submission. Henry could have brought the matter to a peaceful issue, much to his own advantage and that of his people. But his soul thirsted for vengeance; he surprised the Saxons and their Thuringian allies at Hohenburg in the meadows on the Unstrut, not far from Langensalza. His army ranged in the same order as that of Otto the Great at the battle of the Lech, gained a sanguinary victory (1075). But German had fought against German, and on the evening of the battle loud lamentations broke forth in the royal army for the fallen, many of whom had been slain by the hands of their own kin. Nevertheless Henry was now master of Saxony and lord of all Germany; he seemed to have established his throne firmly once more. So he would have done, in all likelihood, had he not imprudently involved himself in a much more serious quarrel.

## QUARREL BETWEEN HENRY IV AND GREGORY VII

We know how, amidst the indescribable barbarism, misery, and violence of the eleventh century, a reformation of morals, though in a gloomy monastic form, had proceeded from the convent of Cluny; and how the emperor Henry III himself had endeavoured to promote it. Through Hildebrand this reformation was transferred to Rome, to the court of the popes, who for nearly two centuries had been oblivious of the vocation ascribed to them by the faith of the age. As long as Henry III was alive, the Romans on whom the election still depended had, by Hildebrand's advice, allowed the emperor to designate the popes. During the minority of Henry IV, the election was for the first time committed to the college of cardinals; and in 1075 Hildebrand was elected pope under the title of Gregory VII.

This great and gifted man immediately proceeded to carry his own ideas into practice. He would have the church thenceforth free from all temporal authority, that of the emperor included. He therefore issued an edict, which had already been suggested in earlier counsels but never carried out, prescribing the celibacy of the clergy. Unhampered by wife, child, and earthly

[1075 A.D.]

cares, the clergy were in future to feel themselves merely members of a powerful ecclesiastical community, receiving orders from Rome, from the successor of St. Peter, the vicegerent of God and Christ upon earth. This edict, deeply as it touched the life of the nation, might seem to affect the emperor but slightly; yet a second struck at the roots of his power. Henceforth neither the emperor nor any temporal sovereign was to appoint bishops; in the phraseology of the time the investiture — *i.e.*, the conferring of the ring and crosier, the symbols of episcopal office — was no longer to be in the hands of laymen. The cathedral chapter, that is to say the college of clergy attached to each cathedral, was to make the election, the pope to confirm it; no gift nor purchase was to be made on elevation to the sacred office, otherwise the candidate was guilty of simony, as the offence was styled, by a reference to Acts, viii, 18.

This edict was a heavy blow to the German monarchs, for since the reign of Henry II they had sought and found support among the bishops against the increasing power of the nobles. The estates of the church formed a considerable portion of the imperial territory; the monarch disposed of them and of their revenues if he appointed bishops, as he had always done up to this time. Many of Henry IV's appointments had been made, not with his father's strict regard for clerical fitness, but for his own profit and to meet the needs of the moment. Some of these bishops had paid money to Henry's counsellors for their appointment, and for this, in 1075, Gregory VII put them as well as the counsellors under the ban, demanding of the king to depose them, and threatening him with the punishment of the church if he refused. Long had Henry watched unwillingly the encroachments of the pope; after the victory over the Saxons had restored his power in the empire, he attempted, following the example of his father, to depose Gregory — without reflecting how much weaker his power was than his father's, and how much nobler and greater was the mind of Gregory VII than were those of the previous popes. At Worms in 1076 he held a synod of German bishops, who neither by their worthy living nor their education could be called mirrors of the church. By them on a trumped-up accusation he had Gregory VII deposed. Gregory replied with the ban in 1076. This was the first time a pope had attempted this measure against a German king. And Henry was soon to realise what a ban, which at that time loosed all bonds of feudal obedience, signified. It was the signal for the princes, who jealously saw the royal power restored, to desert him. In the autumn of the same year they held a diet at Tribur on the old election field, and sent word to the king that if in a year and a day he was not free from the ban, they could no longer consider him their lord.

Henry saw himself deserted by all; he heard that Gregory VII was already on the way to Germany to adjudge his cause. He resolved on a reconciliation with the pope as the best way out of his troubles. He started in the severe winter, when the rivers were almost frozen in their beds, and crossed the snow-covered Alps, not as his predecessors with a formidable army, but as a penitent, accompanied by his noble-minded wife, a few faithful servants, and those placed under the ban with him. In Lombardy, in which a strong opposition prevailed against Gregory's innovations, he had been offered means of resistance, but he rejected them, and hastened to Canossa, the fortress of the powerful Countess Matilda of Tuscany, a daughter of that Beatrice who had once caused Henry III such anxiety. She was as devoted to Gregory VII as to an ecclesiastical father, and now offered him her castle. Henry did not come as an assailant, but as a supplicant.[1]

So picturesque and important was this pilgrimage that it has fallen into proverb, and "going to Canossa" is a metaphor of humiliation. The contrast between Henry IV's beggar-like penance and the manner in which his forefathers went into Italy and the manner in which the popes received them, is vivid enough to merit a liberal quotation from the old historian Lambert von Hersfeld,[g] a contemporary of the event he describes.[a]

### "GOING TO CANOSSA": A CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT

Henry IV arrived as he had been ordered, and the castle being surrounded by three walls, he was received in the circuit of the second wall, which went round the castle, the whole of his followers remaining outside, and there, having put down the ensigns of his dignity as a king, and without any ornaments, having no longer any magnificent wearing apparel, he stood with bare feet, fasting from morning until evening, awaiting the sentence of the Roman pope. Thus he spent his second, yea, his third day! Only on the fourth day was he led before him, and after much talking to and fro, delivered from the ban under the following conditions:

HENRY IV
(Based on the effigy on his tomb)

(1) That he should be present at any day or place the pope should decide upon and, all the princes having been assembled for a general meeting, find his way there to reply to the charges which were to be brought against him; the pope meanwhile, if so it pleased him, sitting on the judgment-seat, to decide the matter. After this sentence he was to keep the empire, were he able to dispel the accusations, or he was to lose it without anger, if, after having been convicted, he should be judged according to the laws of the church unworthy of royal honours. But whether he kept the realm or lost it, he never on any account or at any time should take revenge on any human being for this humiliation.

(2) Till the day, however, when his affair should be settled by lawful instigation, he must not use any apparel of kingly splendour, nor token of kingly dignity, undertake nothing bearing upon the organisation of the state, ordinarily his right, nor decide anything which ought to be valid.

(3) Except calling in the taxes indispensable for the keep of himself and his own people, he was to use no kingly or public moneys. As to all those who had sworn allegiance to him, they were to be free and relieved of the

[1077 A.D.]

thraldom of the oath and of the duty to keep true to him before God and man.

(4) He must keep forever aloof from Ruotbert, bishop of Bamberg, Andalrich von Cosheim, and the others by whose counsels he had destroyed himself as well as his empire, and never again admit them into his intimate companionship.

(5) Should he, after contestation of the accusations, remain at the head of the empire, newly strengthened and powerful, he must always be submissive to the pope and obey his command, and be on his side to improve everything against the laws of the church, which in his realm had taken root in consequence of bad habits, yea, do all in his power to reach that goal.

(6) Finally, should he in the future act against one of these points, the deliverance from the ban which had been so ardently longed for would be considered as null and void, yea, he would be regarded as convicted and having confessed, and no further hearing would be granted to him to declare his innocence. As to the princes of the empire being permitted to join their votes and so elect another king, they might do so without being further examined, and were relieved from all duties of allegiance.

The king accepted these conditions with joy and with the most solemn assurances promised to fulfil them. However, there was little confidence felt in his word, therefore the abbot of Cloniaca, who declined to take the oath on account of his priestly vows, pledged his troth before the eyes of the all-seeing God; the bishop of Zeits, the bishop of Vercelli, the markgraf Azzo and the other princes took oath, putting their hands on the bones of the saints, which were presented to them, that the king would not be led away from his purpose, neither through any trouble, nor through the change of events.

Thus having been made free from excommunication the pope said a high mass calling the king with the rest of the assistants. After having offered the sacrifice of the sacrament, he said to the crowd which was numerous around the altar, whilst holding in his hand the body of Christ — the sacred bread: "Not long ago I have received writings from you and your followers, wherein you accused me of ascending the apostolic chair by the heresy of simony, and that before receiving my episcopate and after its reception I have soiled my life with some other crimes; which according to the statutes of the canon forbid me to approach the holy sacraments. By the word of many witnesses, worthy ones beyond a doubt, I might refute the accusations; I speak of witnesses who know my whole life to the very fullest from my early youth. I also speak of those who have advanced my nomination to the holy see. You must not believe though that I depend upon human rather than upon divine testimony; to free each and all from this error, and that in the very shortest time, the sacrament, of which I am about to partake, shall be to me to-day a touchstone of my innocence. May the all-powerful God by his decree speak me either free from even the suspicion of the crime I am accused of, or make me die a sudden death if I am guilty."

These words and others he spoke, such solemn usage being customary, and called upon the Lord to support him, he being the most just of judges and the protector of innocence; then he partook of the sacrament. Having partaken of it with the greatest calm, and the multitude having raised a shout to the honour of God, which was at the same time a homage to innocence, he turned, after silence was restored, towards the king, saying:

"Do now, my son, if it pleases you, what you have seen me do. The princes of Germany trouble us every day with their complaints; they put

upon your shoulders a great load of terrible crimes, on account of which they deem that you should be kept away, and this up to your very end, not only from all direction of public affairs, but also from frequenting the church, and that you should be held aloof from all intercourse in civil life. They also ask most pressingly that a day may be appointed and audience given for a full canonical investigation of the accusations they are going to bring forward against you. You yourself know best that human judgment is generally deceptive, and that in public lawsuits often the false instead of the true is accepted, things being wrongly expounded; one likes to listen to the speeches of eloquent men, speeches rich by natural gifts, by the richness and charm of expressions, one likes to listen to untruths garbed with the beauty of words — and you know, too, that truth unassisted by eloquence is not considered. In order to better your condition, have you not in your misfortunes most ardently asked the protection of the chair of the apostle? In that case do now what I advise you to do. If you know that you are innocent, and are cognisant that your good name is treacherously attacked, deliver the church of God from scandal and yourself from the doubtful issue of the long strife in the shortest way possible, and partake of the part of the body of the Lord that yet remains. You will thus prove your innocence by the testimony of God and will shut every mouth that speaks wrongly against you. Men in the future and those knowing the real state of things, will be the most ardent defenders of your innocence; the princes will reconcile themselves with you, the empire will be given back, and all storms of war which have troubled the realm for so long a time, will be quieted forever."

Thereupon the king, dazed by the unexpected turn of the whole affair, began to waver, to cast about for expedients, to take counsel with his familiars away from the crowd, and full of fear to consider what he must do and how to escape the necessity of so awful a trial. Having gained courage, he began to give the pope as a pretext the absence of the princes, of those princes at least who had shown him unswerving fidelity during his misfortunes; and without whose counsels he could not act; in the absence of his accusers, moreover, as he said, any proof of innocence which he might furnish as to his justification, before the few who were present, would be useless and without avail before the incredulous. Consequently he urgently asked the pope to keep the matter unchanged for the general assembly and a public hearing, that he might openly refute his accusers; and thus test the accusations as well as the accusers, who should previously have been examined according to the laws of the church. Under these conditions alone recognised by the princes of the empire to be fair and just would he be able to exculpate himself.

The pope willingly granted him this request; after accomplishment of the holy offices he invited the king for breakfast, then dismissed him in the kindest manner possible, after having carefully told him all he had to mind, and sent him with his blessing back to his own people, who had remained outside of the castle. He had sent the bishop Eppa of Zeits outside, to release those from the ban who had held communication with the king whilst he had been excommunicated, and this out of kindness, so that he might not soil the just acquired communication with the church.[g]

The wearer of the imperial crown could no more claim to be the highest power on earth, created by and answerable to God alone. Gregory had extorted the recognition of the absolute superiority of the spiritual dominion; proclaiming that to the pope, as God's vicar, all mankind are subject and all rulers responsible.[j]

Thus the king was freed from the ban, but whilst he was still in Italy, the German princes elected another king, Rudolf of Swabia, his brother-in-law, whom the towns immediately rejected. The pope wished to decide which of the two deserved to be king. At this Henry's courage awoke and he took up arms. He was again put under the ban, but he continued to fight with exhaustless energy in Germany. The whole land was devastated and much blood was shed. Fortune wavered for a long time from one side to the other and most of the nobles wavered with it. But Henry found a true support in the young Frederick of Hohenstaufen, a Swabian noble, who first brought fame to his house and to whom Henry later gave his daughter in marriage, investing him at the same time with the duchy of Swabia. Bohemia, whose duke he soon invested with the title of king, was faithful to him in the fight. In 1080 Rudolf fell in a battle which bid fair to end victoriously for him at Merseburg, slain it is said by the hand of the young Godfrey de Bouillon, the son of the duke of Lorraine who was later to gain still greater honours.

A GERMAN KNIGHT OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

(From an effigy)

Henry had by this time so far regained his power that he could raise up an anti-pope, and undertake a Roman campaign against Gregory VII. He pressed the latter hard in Rome, but with iron resolution Gregory refused to enter into treaty with the banned. Just when his need was greatest, the Normans who hastened up under their king Robert Guiscard (the son of Tancred de Hauteville) saved him from imprisonment. He died a fugitive amongst them at Salerno (1085) without removing the ban from Henry, and with the consciousness of being a martyr. His indomitable spirit, his high ideas of the papacy, descended to his successor. Henry IV had remained outwardly the victor; he received the imperial crown from the hand of his pope, and was held in respect in Germany for a decade. But various misfortunes shattered his family, and mutual mistrust destroyed the relations between him and the princes; still the cup of misfortune destined for him had not yet been emptied.

The religious enthusiasm which had originated in Cluny and been carried by Hildebrand and his followers into the church, soon found an extremely visible aim; western Christianity rose up to free the Holy Sepulchre from the infidels. Many thousands took up the cross in response to the preaching of the hermit Peter of Amiens and the exhortations of Pope Urban II. The agitation seized Germany and also lower Lorraine, passing by, singularly

enough, without leaving any trace, the mass of the people and the emperor Henry IV; it was almost with astonishment that the unrestrained swarms of the hermit were seen passing through Germany, and next giving vent to their wild religious zeal by murdering the Jews. Then came the regular crusaders' army under Godfrey de Bouillon, a German imperial prince, who in 1099 really conquered the Holy Sepulchre, and whose brother won the royal crown of Jerusalem.[i]

Though the death of Gregory VII delivered the emperor from his most dangerous enemy, he found himself compelled to struggle with a rival in the empire, who had been raised by the adherents of the deceased Rudolf. Whilst Henry was busied in besieging Rome, Hermann of Luxemburg received the crown of Germany, and was supported by the Saxon princes, by Welf, duke of Bavaria, and by some of the states of Swabia. The utmost distraction prevailed throughout Germany; and the bishops distinguished themselves by the zeal with which they animated the contending parties. Whilst some, under the influence of the papal legate, upheld the excommunication of Henry, others declared Pope Gregory's proceedings utterly illegal and void, and recognised the anti-pope Clement III as the true head of the church.

Against the Saxons the arms of the emperor were in the first place turned; but amongst these rebels great discord prevailed; and the anti-cæsar Hermann incurred the censures of the church for contracting a marriage within the prohibited degrees. Many of the Saxons voluntarily returned to their allegiance; and Henry succeeded in mastering the remainder, though not without a severe struggle and a sanguinary defeat at Pleichfeld. Hermann of Luxemburg, now fallen into general contempt, obtained permission from Henry to retire to his patrimony in Lorraine; and perished soon afterwards in a mock attack on one of his own castles (1088).

In the midst of this confusion the emperor had still sufficient authority to dispose of two crowns. Out of gratitude to his faithful ally, Wratislaw, duke of Bohemia, he conferred on him the royal title, and caused him to be crowned king at Prague by the archbishop of Trèves. And at Aachen, Conrad, eldest son of Henry, was anointed king of Germany by the archbishop of Cologne in the year 1087.

Besides the rebellious Saxons the emperor was compelled to take arms against his cousin-german, Eckbert, markgraf of Thuringia, who now aspired to the imperial dignity. Another competitor was also in the field, Ludolf, duke of Carinthia. But these rival claims were without difficulty silenced. Eckbert was surprised and slain in a mill near Brunswick, by the vassals of Adelaide, abbess of Quedlinburg, the emperor's sister; and Ludolf died about the same period without striking a blow.

### HENRY AND CONRAD

Peace being thus restored in Germany, Henry made haste to revisit Italy, where he hoped to reap advantage from the death of his arch-foe, Pope Gregory VII. After the short pontificate of Victor III, Urban II was raised to the papacy; and, as he seemed resolved to tread in the steps of Gregory, he received the cordial support of the countess Matilda. That princess had entered into a second marriage with Welf, son of Welf VI, duke of Bavaria, a union which ranged one of the most formidable of the German nobles against the fortunes of Henry. After laying waste the estates of Matilda in Lorraine the emperor arrived in Lombardy, besieged and took

Mantua, and received considerable encouragement by the rupture of Welf with the countess, and the desertion of the father and son from the papal cause.

But these propitious events were more than countervailed by the rebellion of his own son, Conrad, whose unnatural ambition tempted him to this fatal step. Seduced by the blandishments of Matilda and the pope, he was crowned king of Italy at Milan, with the promise of the imperial dignity on condition of his yielding the great question of investitures. Fortunately the contagion was confined to Italy; and, on his return to Germany, Henry IV found no marks of disaffection. The assembled states maintained their fidelity, declared Conrad to have forfeited the crown, and elected in his stead Henry, second son of the emperor, who swore to respect his father's authority, and abstain from interfering in the government. The services of the imperial partisans were liberally rewarded, and to Welf VI were restored the duchy of Bavaria and other states which he had forfeited by his former rebellion. The guilty Conrad soon found his visions of dominion entirely dissipated. Discouraged by the fidelity of the Germans to the emperor the supporters of the young prince fell rapidly away, and he died deserted and despised at Florence, not without suspicion of poison (1101).

Henry IV now again announced his intention of visiting Italy, in the hope of effecting a reconciliation between the empire and the popedom. But his schemes were at once frustrated by a new rebellion. Neither regarding the oath he had solemnly sworn, nor admonished by the example of his brother's fall, Henry, second son of the emperor, impatient of the long reign of his father, appeared in arms against him. The rebellious prince found a warm supporter in Pope Paschal II, who succeeded Urban II in 1099, and in a council held in Rome solemnly renewed the censures which his predecessor Gregory had thundered against Henry. No pretension of the see of Rome was more odious than the right it assumed to absolve men from oaths deliberately taken; and the new pope taught the prince to believe that the excommunication of his father completely freed him from all obligation. In the bitterness of his heart the afflicted Henry attempted to recall his son to a sense of duty by the most gentle and touching exhortations; but these mild efforts were entirely lost upon the prince, who resolutely declared his determination to avoid all intercourse with a man excommunicated.[k]

### END OF HENRY IV

Perhaps he feared that through the growing weakness of his father more of the royal power might be lost; perhaps his ambition could not wait for the time when the crown would fall to him, or he feared that another would be elected in his stead; at any rate in 1105 he rebelled. Most of the German princes were on his side. The exasperated father likewise prepared for combat, and a civil war more cruel than any former ones shattered the empire.

On the river Regen father and son stood face to face, the former still strong through the support of Leopold of Austria and the duke of Bohemia. Skirmishing went on for three days without anything decisive having occurred, and then young Henry won over Leopold of Austria by the promise to give him his sister Agnes, the widow of the great Staufen, in marriage. With him all deserted the aged emperor, and he stood alone as Louis the Pious had once stood on the Lügenfeld. But the kindly

feeling which his predecessors, and especially he himself, had shown to the towns now bore plentiful fruit. Through the rights and liberties conferred upon them and increased by the emperors since Conrad II they had now become flourishing communities, and their numerous and well fortified residences bordered the great commercial waterway of the Rhine. They all declared themselves on the side of the aged emperor; luck seemed to desert his wicked son. Under the mask of hypocrisy he came to Coblenz, humbled himself before his father, and begged for forgiveness: the princes assembled in Mainz were to settle the last quarrel. The father forgave his son, and took him in his arms with tears; then unsuspectingly he rode with him to the appointed place of meeting. But the son with evil cunning decoyed him to the fortress of Böckelheim in Nahethale: the grating fell behind the emperor as he entered, and he found himself his son's prisoner. The latter with his princes demanded his voluntary abdication and the surrendering of the crown jewels. Broken down by misfortune the old man had to accede to these requests. But new abuses and even danger of death threatened him; then he fled from the custody of his son, and the faithful towns again armed for his safety. The war began anew, and its issue was hard to foretell; then the news came from Lüttich that the emperor was dead (1106). Even in death the ban weighed upon him, for his coffin remained unburied for over five years in unconsecrated places; but the people loudly lamented the dearly loved ruler, who after the short errors of youth had been so long and heavily afflicted by misfortune. Certainly his last years did much, if the old chroniclers may be believed, to remove the stains of his early follies and crimes. He is represented as having, after his victory over Gregory VII, protected the poor against their oppressors, put down robbery, administered justice, and maintained the public peace.

## HENRY V AND THE WAR OF INVESTITURES

Henry V was now acknowledged throughout the empire. He owed his crown to the papal party and the princes, but no sooner was he in possession of the power for which he had striven than he showed that he had resolution enough to hold his own against all comers. Abroad he succeeded in restoring the dominion of the empire over Flanders and securing his western frontier; his campaigns on the eastern border, against Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia, were less fortunate. In the interior and in his relations to the princes he could effect little change in the conditions which had grown up under Henry IV. The fiefs, large and small, had long since become hereditary, the crown property had dwindled sadly; hardly any district was under the direct rule of the king. In case of war the latter summoned his great vassals, and they in their turn summoned their feudal retainers and "ministerials"—*i.e.*, vassals; and these constituted the army of the empire. Thus feudalism had penetrated to the lowest ranks of the people, but the king was still regarded as the ruling head of the state; and a powerful monarch at the head of this body of many members could accomplish more than the other sovereigns of Europe, whose power in their own dominions was no less restricted by that of their great vassals.

Devoid of heart and conscience though he might be, Henry V was by no means deficient in the prudence and capacity for government which had characterised his forefathers. He possessed resolution and boldness; but he was hasty and precipitate, and often frustrated his own great purposes by

acts of arbitrary violence. The papal party soon realised that they had mistaken his character; for he contested the papal right of investiture even more resolutely than his father had done, and as early as 1110 he undertook a brilliant expedition to Rome in connection with the matter. When he reached Lombardy and held a diet of the empire on the plains of Roncaglia near Piacenza, the Italian cities (with the exception of Milan and Pavia) which had risen more rapidly than those of Germany and to a height of prosperity even greater, acknowledged his supremacy and the countess Matilda did him homage as her feudal lord. In the year 1111 he arrived at Rome.

The quarrel with Pope Paschal II had broken out afresh over the question of his coronation and the investiture, but at length the disputants came to an agreement to the effect that the emperor should renounce the right of investiture and that the pope should prevail upon the lords spiritual to resign all temporal dominion in the empire. The pope then led the king to St. Peter's, according to ancient usage, amidst hymns of praise and great rejoicings. Henry, however, had already surrounded the cathedral by Germans. When the bishops refused the renunciation required of them, and the emperor consequently demanded full rights of investiture, the pope was in doubt as to whether he should proceed with the coronation under these circumstances. One of Henry's retinue cried impatiently: "What need of so many words? It is the will of my lord the king to be crowned as Charlemagne was!"

From that moment the pope and his cardinals were prisoners. Henry carried the former off with him, in spite of a furious tumult at Rome, through which he and his knights cut their way with the sword. But the spirit of Gregory VII lived on in the church; when the pope, his spirit broken by confinement, granted the king the right of investing bishops and abbots, and actually crowned Henry after his release from prison, the cardinals and the French clergy excommunicated the emperor and continued the conflict with their ghostly weapons. Meanwhile Henry V had returned to Germany, where fortune still smiled upon him; for at Warnstedt, to the north of the Harz, his general Hoyer von Mansfeld defeated the Saxon and Thuringian nobles, with Ludwig der Springer, "the jumper," and Wiprecht von Groitzsch among them, who had risen in revolt against the imperial house with their old stubborn defiance (1113).

The emperor, who had just concluded a brilliant marriage with Matilda of England, was now at the height of his power; but he nevertheless did not succeed in permanently establishing the royal authority in North Germany, where the Saxons in particular were constantly striving to secure a more independent position. When Henry was on an expedition against the Frisians, the city of Cologne rebelled, and the princes of the lower Rhine entered into alliance with it. Henry's good fortune deserted him before its walls; and his enemies lifted their heads on all sides. By his action in imprisoning Count Ludwig of Thuringia he had incurred the violent resentment of the Saxon and Thuringian nobles. They arose afresh in rebellion, and this time they defeated the emperor at Welfesholze near Mansfeld in the Harz (1115). The whole of North Germany and almost the whole of the German church fell away from him; in South Germany, on the contrary, his nephew, Friedrich von Staufen, duke of Swabia, remained loyal to the imperial cause, as did Bavaria under Welf.

Henry himself had gone to Italy again (1116-1118), another cause of quarrel having been added to the War of Investiture, which still dragged

on. Countess Matilda was dead, and had bequeathed all her lands and goods to the holy see. A great part of the land, however, was held as a fief of the empire, and should therefore have reverted to the king on her death without issue; and Henry further laid claim to her *allodium*, or property, on the ground of near kinship. While he was in Italy Paschal II died.

In the person of his next successor but one, the papal throne was occupied, for the first time since the reign of Hildebrand, by a pope who had not been a monk. This was Guido of Vienne, a Burgundian of high rank and a kinsman of Henry's, who took the name of Calixtus II. The elevation of this prudent and far-sighted man offered the emperor the prospect of reconciliation, although the new pope had hitherto been the leader of his opponents among the cardinals; and negotiations were set on foot. Calixtus went to France, which country, striving upwards with fresh vigour ever since the Crusades, became the zealous champion of the papacy. For a long time the negotiations led to no result; a personal interview between the pope and the emperor was projected, but the distrust of years and the memory of the capture of Paschal II prevented it from taking place. Calixtus retained the upper hand in Italy, Henry in Germany. But in spite of many successes on either side, both were inclined to moderate their demands. The German princes assumed the office of mediators, and after fifty years of strife the investiture quarrel was settled by the Concordat of Worms in 1122.

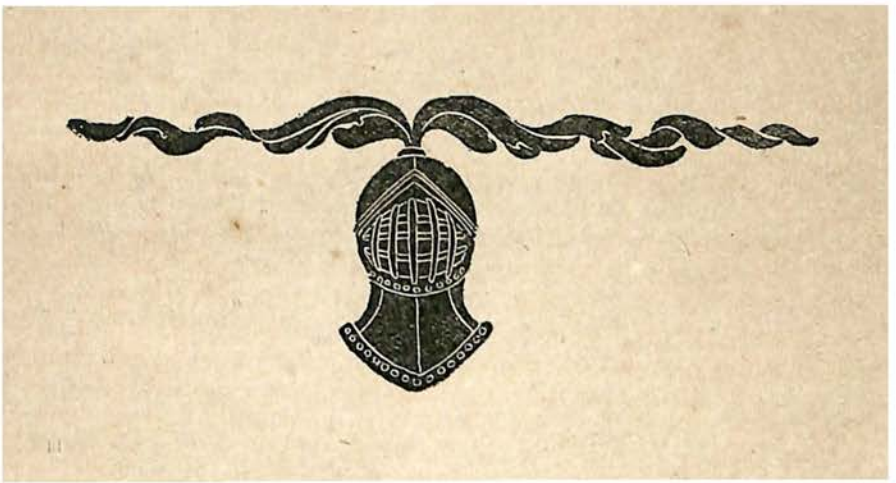
The king resigned the investiture with ring and crosier, but obtained the privilege that the election of bishops should take place in his presence or in that of his representative, and that — in Germany at least — they should receive the territory appertaining to their sees in fief from the imperial crown before they were consecrated. Thus the emperor had secured much; but the papacy, on the other hand, had acquired a considerable influence in imperial affairs, and the loyalty of the bishops, which had been the strongest pillar of the throne, began to waver. Henry died at Nimeguen (1125) without issue; and the people, who had never loved him, saw in his childlessness the retribution for the war with his father, and his transgression of his duty as a son.

From the hands of Henry II the Franconian dynasty received a re-consolidated empire, although the great fiefs within it had already become hereditary. The first princes of the line, Conrad II and Henry III, who in greatness were second to none of the emperors of Germany, had so strengthened the royal power that both were able to cherish the dream of an empire such as Otto the Great's had been. Their power passed to a child, and the nobles broke away from the curb all the sooner that it had been drawn overtight. At the same time the church entered the field as a fresh power, wielding forces that were better organised and more deeply rooted in the popular mind than those of the empire, and armed with resources more efficacious than the sword.

Henry V, whose character offered so many points open to attack, succumbed in the conflict with these two forces. Towards the end of the eleventh century all fiefs had become hereditary, and bishoprics were no longer unconditionally at the emperor's disposal; and he was therefore constrained to rely upon his dynastic possessions and his moral ascendency. In manners and education the Germany of the eleventh century lagged behind the awakening intellectual life of the Romance nations. The great effects of the Crusades had to become manifest before the crowning glory of the Middle Ages could extend to that country.*i*

[1122–1125 A.D.]

With the death of Henry V the Franconian dynasty came to an end. The change of dynasty furnishes us a convenient place to pause in our narrative of the development of the Western Empire. We have seen that the centre of influence has long since shifted to the North, and that the Western Empire, though Roman in name, is essentially German in fact. Several important emperors are to come upon the scene in the next two or three centuries, and such men as Frederick Barbarossa and Frederick II will make Italy the field of some of their most prominent activities. Nevertheless, these emperors are German and the records of their lives are a component part of the history of the German Empire. We shall again take up the story of the German Empire in a later volume with the accession of the Hohenstaufens. Now for a time we are to turn back to the East, to witness the development of a wonderful oriental civilisation.[a]



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[A further list of works on the Later Roman Empire in the West will be found in the *General Bibliographies of Rome, of Italy, and of Germany*, Vols. VI, IX, and XIV, respectively.]

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MAP OF THE
EMPIRE OF
CHARLEMAGNE.
SCALE OF MILES
0 50 100 200 300
Original Kingdom
Charlemagne's Conquests
OCCIDENTALIS OCEANUS
ESTHONIA
WENEDONIA OR SLAVANIA
KINGDOM OF THE AVARS
SCLAVINIA
ADRIATICUM MARE
BALEARICUM MARE
BYZANTINE EMPIRE
EMPIRE OF CHARLEMAGNE
KINGDOM OF ITALY
SAXONIA
AUSTRIA
ALAMANNIA
BAIOAR
CARANTANA
CHROBATIA
DALMATIA
BENEVENTUS
CALABRIA
SICILIA
SARDINIA
CORSICA
MINORICA
MAIORICA
BALEARIC IS.
AQUITANIA
WASCONIA
LIMES HISPANICUS
BRITANNIA
BRITISH KMS.
ENGLISH KMS.
SCOTTISH KMS.
KM. OF THE ASTURIAS AND GALICIA
OMAYYAD EMIRATE OF KURTUBA
KURTUBA (CORDOBA)
Longitude West from Greenwich
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